

HISTORY

LATIN CHRISTIANITY;

INCLUDING THAT OF
THE POPES TO THE PONTIFICATE OF NICOLAS V.

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HISTORY

OF

LATIN CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK III.—*continued.*

CHAPTER V.

Christian Jurisprudence.*

CHRISTIANITY had been now for more than two centuries the established religion of the Roman Empire; it was the religion of all those independent kingdoms which were forming themselves within the dissevered provinces of Rome. Between the religion and the laws of all nations must subsist an intimate and indissoluble connexion. During all that period the vast and august jurisprudence of Rome had been constantly enlarged by new imperial edicts or authoritative decrees, supplementary to, or corrective and interpretative of, the ancient statutes.

I. The jurisprudence of the old Roman Empire at first admitted, but only in a limited degree, this modifying power of Christianity. The laws which were purely Christian were hardly more than accessory and supplementary to the vast code which had accumulated from

* Let me not be suspected of the vain ambition of emulating Gibbon's splendid chapter on Roman Law, which has become the text-book in universities (see my edition of Gibbon). My object is more narrow and limited; and appeared necessary to the history even of Latin Christianity; to show the interworking of Christianity into the Roman jurisprudence.

the days of the republic, through the great lawyers of the empire, down to Theodosius and Justinian. But the complete moral, social, and in some sense political revolution, through Christianity, could not be without influence, both as creating a necessity for new laws adapted to the present order of things, or as controlling, through the mind of the legislator, the general temper and spirit of the legislation. A Christian Emperor could not exclude this influence from his mind, either as affecting his moral appreciation of certain obligations and transgressions, or as ascertaining and defining the social position, the rights and duties, of new classes and divisions of his subjects. Under Christianity a new order of men of a peculiar character, with special privileges, immunities, and functions, had grown up throughout the whole society; new corporate bodies, the churches and the monasteries, had been formed, holding property of every kind by a new tenure; certain offences in the penal code were now looked on with a milder or more severe aspect; a more strict morality had attempted to knit more closely some of the relations of life; vices which had been tolerated became crimes against social order; and an offence, absolutely new in the extent of odiousness in which it was held, and the rigour with which it was punished, Heresy, or dissent from the dominant religion, in all its various forms, had been introduced into the criminal jurisdiction, not of the Church only, but of the Empire. The imperial legislation could not refuse, it was not inclined to refuse, to take cognizance of this novel order of things, and to adapt itself to the necessities of the age.

II. The Barbaric Codes, which embodied in written statutes the unwritten, immemorial, and traditionary

laws and usages of the Teutonic tribes (the common law of the German forests), assuming their positive form after the different races had submitted to Christianity, were more completely interpenetrated, as it were, with Christian influences. The unlettered barbarians willingly accepted the aid of the lettered clergy, still chiefly of Roman birth, to reduce to writing the institutes of their forefathers. Though these codes therefore, in their general character and main principles, are essentially Teutonic—in their broad principles are deduced from the free usages of the old German tribes—yet throughout they are modified by Christian notions, and admit a singular infusion, not merely of the precepts of the New Testament, but of the positive laws of the Old.

Barbaric
codes.

But III. Christianity had its own peculiar and special jurisprudence. The Christian community, or rather the separate communities, had originally exercised this power of internal legislation. They held each its separate tribunal, which adjudicated not only on religious matters, but, as an acknowledged wise and venerated arbitrator, in civil litigation. This legislation and administration of law had gradually become vested in the clergy alone; and, instead of each community ruling its own internal concerns, and presiding over its own separate members, the Church, as chiefly represented by the bishops either in local or national synods, or in general councils, enacted statutes or canons, considered binding on the whole Christian world. The sanctions of this Christian jurisprudence were properly altogether religious: they rested on opinion, on the voluntary submission of each individual mind to spiritual authority. Their punishments and rewards were properly those of the life to come. The only punishments in this world were those of the penitential discipline, or

Christian ju-
risprudence.

excommunication from the Christian society, which was tantamount, with all who believed salvation to be the exclusive privilege of the Church, to a sentence of eternal damnation. Those who braved that disfranchisement—who either, as the Jews, never had entered within the community, or as holding heretical opinions had renounced it—were rightfully beyond its jurisdiction. The legislators and administrators of the laws had lost all cognizance over those upon whose faith or whose fears they had no hold. These were outlaws, who, as they blindly or obstinately disclaimed the inestimable privileges of the Church, could not be amenable at least to its temporal penalties. Unhappily the civil and canon, the Imperial and Christian, legislation would not maintain their respective boundaries. This arose partly from the established constitutional doctrine of Rome, that the Republic (now the Emperor) was the religious as well as the civil head of the Empire; partly from the blindness of Christian zeal, which thought all means lawful to advance the true, or to suppress erroneous, belief; and therefore fell into the irreconcilable contradiction of inflicting temporal penalties by temporal hands for spiritual offences. Athanasius hailed and
Supremacy
of the Em-
peror. applauded the full civil supremacy of the state when it commanded the exile of Arius; contested, resisted, branded it as usurping tyranny, when it would exact obedience from himself. Thus, though the Councils were the proper legislative senates of Christianity, so long as the Empire lasted in the West, even later; and in the East down to the latest times; the Emperors enacted and enforced the observation of the ecclesiastical as well as of the civil law. Theodosius and Gratian define or ratify the definition of doctrines, declare and condemn heretics. Justinian is a kind of Caliph of Christianity, at once in

the authoritative tone and in the subjects which he comprehends under his decrees he is a Pope and an Emperor. In the barbaric codes there is the same absolute supremacy of the sovereign law—in theory the same, but restricted by the more limited royal power, and the peculiar relation of the clergy to tribes newly converted to Christianity. Where there is a strong monarchy, it assumes a dominion scarcely less full and complete than under the Christian Emperors. Charlemagne, in his imperial edicts, is at once the legislator of the Church and of the State.

Thus then in Christendom there are three systems of jurisprudence, the Roman Law, the Barbaric or Teutonic Law, the Law of the Church—Three systems of law. this last, as yet but young, humble and limited in its pretensions, a discipline rather than a law, or confined, in a great degree, to the special observance of the clergy.

I. The Emperor Justinian, having now reunited the Eastern and Western Empires, aspired to be the legislator of the world; on Christendom Justinian code. and on the Roman Empire, according to his notions commensurate, he would bestow a full, complete, indefeasible Code of Law. Of the barbaric codes, if even in their initiatory growth or existence, the Roman law, which still held the whole Roman world to be its proper dominion, would be as disdainfully ignorant, as if they were yet the usages of wild tribes beyond the Rhine or the Danube. Even over the Church or Canonical Jurisprudence it would assert, as will immediately appear, majestic superiority; it would admit, confirm, sanction such parts as might demand the supreme imperial intervention, or require imperial authority.

Justinian aspired to consolidate in his eternal legis-

lation all the ancient and modern statutes of the realm.

Necessity for
consolidation
of laws.

The necessity for a complete and final revision—an authoritative reconstruction and harmony of the vast mass of republican, senatorial, imperial decrees, or those accredited interpretations of the law which had become law, and were admitted in the courts of justice—had long been acknowledged. The Roman jurisprudence must become a Code; the decisions of the great lawyers must be selected, distributed under proper heads, and rules be laid down for the superiority of some over others. This jurisprudence comprehended unwritten as well as written law. The unwritten were the ancient Roman traditions, and the principles of eternal justice. The sources of the written law were the XII Tables, the Laws of the Republic, whether *Senatus-Consults* or *Plebiscites*, the decrees of the Emperors, the edicts of the *Prætors*, and the answers of the learned in the law.^b Already attempts had been made to systematise this vast, multifarious, and comprehensive jurisprudence in the *Gregorian*, *Hermogenian*, and finally the *Theodosian codes*. But the enormous mass of laws which had still accumulated, the conflicting decisions of the lawyers, the oppugnance of the laws themselves, seemed to demand this ultimate organisation of the whole; and in *Tribonian* and his *Byzantine lawyers*, *Justinian* supposed that he possessed the wisdom, in himself the power and authority, to establish for ever the jurisprudence of Rome.

But the change which has come over the Roman Empire is manifest at once. That *Justinian* is a *Christian Emperor* appears in the front of his jurisprudence. Before the august temple of the Roman law, there is, as it were, a vestibule, in which

Justinian a
Christian
emperor.

^b *Responsa prudentum.*

the Emperor seats himself as the religious legislator of the world in its new relation towards God. The Christian Emperor treats all mankind as his subjects, in their religious as well as in their civil capacity. The Emperor's creed, as well as his edicts, is the universal law of the Empire. That which was accessory in the code of the former Christian Emperors, and in the Theodosian code fills two supplementary books, stands in the front, and forms the Preface to that of Justinian. His code opens with the Imperial Creed on the Trinity, and the Imperial Anathema against Nestorius, Eutyches, Apollinaris. Justinian declares indeed that he holds the doctrine of the Church, of the Apostles and their successors. He recognises the authority of the four great Councils. He even acknowledges the supremacy of the Roman Church, and commands all Churches to be united with her. At the time of the publication of the code, John III. was Bishop of Rome; but he had been appointed under the Exarch, his inauguration had submissively awaited the Emperor's approbation. Rome therefore, it was hoped, had become, notwithstanding the rapid advance of the Lombards, an integral, an inseparable part of the Empire. Justinian legislates therefore for Rome as for the East. But though the Emperor condescends thus to justify the orthodoxy of his creed, it is altogether of his absolute, uncontrolled, undisputed will that it is law. It might seem indeed that the clergy were the subjects, as first in rank, whose offices, even whose lives, must first be regulated by imperial legislation.

In the following chapters the appointment, the organisation, the subordination, the authority of the ecclesiastical, as of the civil magistrates of the realm, is assumed to emanate from, to be granted, limited, prescribed by, the supreme Emperor. Excom-

LAWS FOR THE
CLERGY.

munication is uttered indeed by the ecclesiastics, but according to the imperial laws and with the imperial warrant. Justinian deigns indeed to allow the canons of the Church to be of not less authority than his laws; but his laws are divine, and those divine laws all metropolitans, bishops, and clergy are bound to obey, and, if commanded, to publish.^c The hierarchy is regulated by his ordinance. He enacts the superiority of the Metropolitan over the bishop, of the bishop over the abbot, of the abbot over the monk. Distinct imperial laws rule the monasteries. The law prescribes the ordinations of bishops, the persons qualified for ordination,^d the whole form and process of that holy ceremony. The law admitted no immunities in the Clergy for crimes committed against the state and against society. It took upon itself the severe superintendence of clerical morals. The passion for theatrical amusements, for the wild excitement of the horse-race and the combat with wild beasts, or even more licentious entertainments, had carried away many of the clergy, even of the bishops. A law, more than once re-enacted and modified, while it acknowledged the power of the clergy's prayers to obtain victory over the barbarians, and to obtain from Heaven extended empire, declared that for this reason they should be unimpeachable. But, notwithstanding the most solemn admonition, they could not be persuaded, not even the bishops, to abstain from the gaming-table, or the theatre with all its blasphemies and licence. The Emperor was compelled to pass this law, prohibiting, under pain of suspension for the first offence, of irrevocable degradation and servitude^e to the public corpora-

^c τοὺς δὲ θειοὺς κανόνας οὐκ ἔλαττον τῶν νόμων ἰσχύειν καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι βούλονται νόμοι.—Cod. ii. 3, 44. They are to publish τὸν θεῖον

ἡμῶν τοῦτον νόμον.—Cod. ii. 3, 43.

^d Especially Nov. cxxiii.; it asserts the fees to be paid on each promotion.

^e δουλεύειν.—Cod. i. 14, 34.

tions, any one of the clergy, of any rank, from being present at the gaming-table or at any public spectacle. These penalties, with other religious punishments, as fastings, were to be inflicted, according to the rank of the offender, by the bishop or the metropolitan. The refusal to punish, or the endeavour to conceal, such offences made both the civil officers and ecclesiastics liable to civil as well as to ecclesiastical penalties.

The bishop was an imperial officer for certain temporal affairs. In each city he was appointed, with three of the chief citizens, annually to inspect the public accounts, and all possessions or bequests made for public works, markets, aqueducts, baths, walls and gates, and bridges. Before him guardians of lunatics swore on the Gospels to administer their trust with fidelity,^f and many legal acts might be performed either in the presence of the Defensor or the bishop of the city.^g For the discharge of these temporal functions the bishops were reasonably answerable to the Emperor; and thus the empire acknowledged at the inspiration of Christianity a new order of civil magistracy.

The law limited the number of clergy to be attached to each Church. This constitution was demanded in order to check that multiplication of the clergy which exhausted the revenues of the church, and led to burthensome debts. In the great Church at Constantinople the numbers were to be reduced to 425, besides 100 ostiarii.^h The smaller churches were on no account to have more than they could maintain.

^f Cod. i. 4, 27.

^g De Episcop. Audient.

^h 60 presbyters, 100 male 40 female deacons, 90 subdeacons, 110 readers, 25 singers. Novell. iii.

There is a curious law concerning interments in Constantinople. 1000 shops, or their rent, seem to have been bestowed on the church for the burial of the poor; they had a bier and

The State issued laws for the regulation of monasteries. None were to be established without the consent of the Bishop. The bishop elected the superior from the community. Slaves might be admitted as well as freemen. A probation of three years was required from all. A slave, if a runaway or thief, might be claimed by his master during those three years. When a monk, he could no longer be claimed, unless he abandoned the monastic life. All were to live in common, to sleep in one chamber. If a monk wished to leave his monastery he went forth a beggar; the monastery retained all his property. If he entered into the army, it could only be into the lowest rank. No monk could leave one monastery for another.¹

Such were the all-comprehending ecclesiastical laws which the Emperor claimed the power to enact. In many cases he commanded or limited the anathema or the interdict. The obedient world, including the Church, acknowledged, at least by submissive obedience, this imperial supremacy.

It is not till Justinian has thus, as it were, fulfilled his divine mission of legislating for his subjects as Christians, that he assumes his proper function, his legislation for them as Romans, and proceeds to his earthly task, the consolidation of the ancient and modern statutes of the Empire.

But the legislation of Justinian, as far as it was origi-

the attendance of the clergy without charge. The rich paid according to their means and will; there was a fixed payment for certain more splendid biers and more solemn attendance.—Novell. xciii.

¹ The Institutes acknowledge the Bishop, with the Defensor, to have

certain powers of appointing guardians.—i. 20, 5. Justinian speaks of the modesty of his times.—i. 22, 1. Two clauses (2, i. 8, 9) relate to churches, &c., iii. 28, 7. Churches named.—iv. 18, 8. Rape of nuns made a capital crime.

nal, in his Code, his Pandects, and in his Institutes, within its civil domain, was still almost exclusively Roman. It might seem that Christianity could hardly penetrate into the solid and well-compacted body of Roman law; or rather, the immutable principles of justice had been so clearly discerned by the inflexible rectitude of the Roman mind, so sagaciously applied by the wisdom of her great lawyers, that Christianity was content to acquiesce in those statutes, which even she might, excepting in some respects, despair of rendering more equitable. Christianity, in the Roman Empire, had entered into a temporal polity, with all its institutions long settled, its laws already framed. The Christians had in their primitive state no natural place in the order of things. That separate authority which the Church exercised over the members of its own community from its origin, and without which the loosest form of society cannot subsist, was in no way recognised by the civil power; they were the voluntary laws of a voluntary association. But, besides these special laws of their own, the Christians were in every respect subjects of the Empire. They were strangers in religion alone. After the comprehensive decree of Caracalla, they, like the rest of mankind within the pale of the Empire, became Roman citizens; and the supremacy of the State in all things which did not concern the vital principles of their religion (for which they were still bound, if the civil power should exercise compulsion, to suffer martyrdom) was acknowledged, both in the West and in the East, both before and after the conversion of Constantine.

The influence therefore of Christianity on the older laws of the Roman Empire could only be exercised through the mind of the legislator, now become Chris-

Roman law
purely
Roman.

tian; and the general moral sentiment, which became more pure or elevated, might modify, and gradually mitigate, some provisions, or more rigidly enforce certain obligations. The Roman law, in its original code, might seem indeed to take a pride in resting upon its antiquity and its purely Roman character; it admits not the language, it appears even to affect a supercilious ignorance of the religion, of the people.^k In the *Institutes* of Justinian^m it requires keen observation to detect the Christianity of the legislator. Tribonian, the great lawyer, to whom the vast work of framing the whole jurisprudence was committed by the Emperor, has incurred the suspicion of atheism, an accusation which, just or not, is strong evidence that his work had refused to incorporate any of the statutes, and bore no signs of Christianity. The prefatory Christian laws, though now become fundamental, are altogether extraneous to the old re-enacted system. They are recorded laws before Tribonian assumes his functions.

The Roman Law may be most conveniently considered, in connexion with the influence of Christianity, as it regards A. Persons; B. Property; and C. Crime.ⁿ

A. The law as regards Persons comprehends the ranks and divisions, and the relations of mankind to each other, sanctioned or recognised by the law, with the privileges, rights, and immunities it may

^k There are several quotations from Homer, not one allusion to any of the sacred writings of Christianity.

^m The *Institutes* are without those prefatory chapters of Christian legislation contained in the code. From those chapters we pass into the Roman Code, as into another land; and it demands our closest attention to discern

how far, now that he has abandoned all the language of Christianity, the spirit of the religion follows the emperor into the ancient realm.

ⁿ This in some degree differs from the division adopted by many writers from the *Institutes* of Justinian, under which the criminal law ranks as a branch of the law of actions or obligations.

grant, the duties it may impose on each. In nothing is the stern and Roman character of the Justinian Code more manifest than in its full recognition of slavery. Throughout, the broad distinction ^{Freemen and slaves.} of mankind into freemen and slaves is the unquestioned, admitted groundwork of legislation. It declares indeed the natural equality of man, and so far is in advance of the doctrine which prevailed in the time of Aristotle, and is vindicated by that philosopher, that certain races or classes of men are pronounced by the unanswerable voice of nature, by their physical and intellectual inferiority, as designed for and irrevocably doomed to servitude. But this natural equality is absolutely and entirely forfeited by certain acknowledged disqualifications for freedom, by captivity in war, self vendition into slavery, or servile descent. Christianity had indeed exalted the slave to spiritual equality, as having the same title to the blessings, consolations, and promises of the Gospel, as capable of practising all Christian virtues, and therefore of obtaining the Christian's reward. This religious elevation could not be without influence, besides the more generous humanity to which it would soften the master, on their temporal and social position. It took them out of the class of brute beasts or inanimate things, to be transferred like cattle or other goods from one master to another, which the owner might damage or destroy with as much impunity as any other property; and placed them in that of human beings, equally under the care of Divine Providence, and gifted with the same immortality. But the legislation of the Christian Emperor went no further. It makes no claim to higher humanity; it does not attempt to despoil the pagan Emperors of the praise due to the first step made in that direction. It ascribes

to the heathen sovereign, Antoninus, the great change which had placed the life of the slave under the protection of the law. Even his punishment was then restricted by legislative enactment.^o But the abrogation of slavery was not contemplated even as a remote possibility. A general enfranchisement seems never to have dawned on the wisest and best of the Christian writers, notwithstanding the greater facility for manumission, and the sanctity, as it were, assigned to the act by Constantine, by placing it under the special superintendence of the clergy.

The law of Justinian gave indeed, or recognised, a greater value in the life of the slave. The Law of Slavery. edict of Antoninus had declared the master who killed his own slave without cause, liable to the same penalty as if he killed the slave of another.^p The Code of Justinian ratified the law of Constantine, which made it homicide to kill a slave with malice aforethought; and it describes certain modes of barbarous punishment, by which, if death follows, that guilt is incurred.^q The Code confirms the law of Claudius against the abandonment of sick and useless slaves; it enjoins the master to send them to the public hospitals. These hospitals were open to slaves as well as to poor freemen. "In these times, and under our empire," writes Justinian, "no one must be permitted to exercise unlawful cruelty against a slave." The motive, however, for this was not evangelic humanity, but the public good, which was infringed if any man ill-used his property.^r

^o Caius, i. 53; Just. Instit. i. viii.

² Constantine, in 312, had enlarged this law — C. Theod. de emend. serv. l. 9, 1.

^p Caius, i. 53.

^q Cod. Just. ix. 14.

^r "Expedi enim reipublice, ne quis re sua utatur male." — Instit. i. viii.

But while it protected the life, to a certain extent the person of the slave, it asserted as sternly as ever his inferior condition. He was the property of his master. Whoever became a slave lost all power over his children.^s His testimony could be received against his master only in cases of high treason. His union with his wife was still only concubinage, not marriage.^t The slave had no remedy for adultery before the tribunals; it was left to the master to punish the offence. A free woman who had unlawful connexion with her slave, according to the law of Constantine, not, as it seems, repealed by Justinian, was to be put to death, the slave to be burned alive. But the law of Constantine, confirmed in the West by Anthemius, which prohibited the union of a freeman and a slave, at least a freeman of a certain rank, under the penalty of exile and confiscation of goods, and condemned the female to the mines, appears to have been mitigated; at least the law of Claudius, which condemned the free woman who married a slave to servitude, was tempered to a sentence of separation. In the old Roman society in the Eastern Empire this distinction between the marriage of the freeman and the concubinage of the slave was long recognised by Christianity itself. These unions were not blessed, as the marriages of their superiors had soon begun to be, by the Church.^u Basil the Macedonian^x first enacted that the priestly benediction should hallow the marriage of the slave; but the authority of the Emperor was counteracted by the deep-rooted prejudices of centuries. Later laws appear to have attempted the reconciliation of the

^s Instit. i. 16, and ii. 9, 3. Cod. ix. 1, 20.

^t Contubernium, not connubium.

^u It was thought that the marriage

before the church would of itself confer civil freedom.—Biot sur l'Esclavage, p. 146.

^x A.D. 867-886.

Christian privilege with the social distinction. The marriages of slaves were to be celebrated in the Church; slaves and freemen were to receive the same nuptial benediction, without conferring freedom on the slave.⁵ As late as the thirteenth century a mandate of Nicetas, archbishop of Thessalonica, excommunicates masters who refuse to allow their slaves to be married in the Church.

The trade in slaves was still a principal and recognised branch of commerce. Man was a marketable commodity. The whole code of Justinian speaks of the slave as bearing a certain appreciable value, to be held by the same tenure, transferred by the same form, as other property. It was the weakness of Rome, not her humanity or her Christianity, which, by ceasing to supply the markets with hordes of conquered barbarians, diminished the trade; and Roman citizens were sold, with utter disregard of their haughty privileges, by barbarian or Jewish slave-venders. Throughout Greek and Latin Christendom, however the Church, by its precept and example, might rank the redemption of Christian slaves from bondage as a high virtue, the purchase and the sale of men, as property transferred from vendor to buyer, was recognised as a legal transaction of the same validity with the sale of other property, land, or cattle.

The Christian family, in its more restricted sense, comprehending the relations of husband and wife, of parent and children, had been the centre from which the Gospel worked outwards with all its beneficent energy on society. But Christianity, conscious of its more profound and extensive influence on morals, was in most respects content to rest without

⁵ *Constitut. Imp.* xi. *Jus Gr. Roman.* i. p. 145. Biot, p. 213.

intruding into the province of law.² It superadded its own sanctity to the dignity with which marriage had been arrayed by the older Roman law: it superadded its own tenderness to that mitigation of the arbitrary parental power with which the more humane habits of later times, and the wisdom of the great lawyers, had controlled the despotism of the Roman father. The Roman definition of marriage might almost satisfy the lofty demands of Christianity. Matrimony is the union of man and woman, constraining them to an inseparable cohabitation.³ Polygamy had been prohibited by the Prætorian Edict with a distinct severity not to be found in the New Testament.^b Marriage, in the oldest Roman law, was a religious rite. The purchase of the wife, the partaking of food together,^c took place in the presence of the pontiffs. These ceremonials were at no time absolutely necessary; but even under the Republic, marriage was

Parental power.

Marriage.

² See throughout this chapter—the Codes, Pandects, and Institutes. Of modern works, Gibbon's celebrated chapter, with Warnkönig's notes; Ferdinand Walter, *Geschichte des Römischen Rechts*, pp. 332 *et seq.*

^a "Nuptiæ autem sive matrimonium est viri et mulieris conjunctio, *indivisiuam vitæ consuetudinem continens.*" —Instit. i. ix. 1.

^b "Neminem qui sub ditione sit Romani nominis binas uxores habere posse vulgo patet; cum etiam in *Edicto Prætoris* hujusmodi viri infamia notati sint: quam rem competens iudex inultam esse non patietur." —Cod. v. tit. 5, 2. The silence of the New Testament as to polygamy, excepting in the doubtful text about the

bishop, has been the subject of much learned contest and inquiry. The desuetude into which it had fallen among the Jews, and its prohibition by Roman manners, if not by Roman laws, accounts for this silence, in my opinion, most fully, considering the popular character of our Lord's teaching and that of his apostles.

^c *Coemptio et confarreatio*. — The *confarreatio* was the more solemn form of marriage, and could only be annulled by certain tremendous rites, which represented as it were the death of the contracting parties. — Festus, *Defarreatio*. It had fallen into disuse with the extinction of the older families. The other two forms of marriage contract were *coemptio* and *usus*.

altogether, as to its validity, a civil contract. With the Christians marriage had resumed a more solemn religious character. Certain forms of espousals or of wedlock are among the most unquestionable usages of the earliest Christian antiquity. On marriage the Christian is taught to take counsel of the bishop.^d Some kind of benediction in the Church, or in the presence of the community, gave its peculiar holiness to the marriage ceremony.^e Christianity did not decline some of the gayer and more innocent usages of Jewish and heathen marriages—the crowns, the ring, the veil of the virgin. Still, the Christian might hallow his union by the benediction of the Church; the betrothal or the espousals might take place in the presence of the religious community;^f yet the Roman citizen was bound only by the civil contract. On this alone depended the validity of the marriage, the legitimacy and right of succession in the children. The Church, or the clergy representing the Church, had no jurisdiction in matrimonial questions till after the legislation of Justinian. It was never perfect and supreme in the East; in the West it grew up gradually with the all-absorbing sacerdotal power.

As to incestuous marriages, marriages within the more intimate degrees of relationship, Christianity might repose upon the rigour of the Roman law.^g There was no necessity to recur to the books

^d Ignat. Epist. ad Polycarp. This passage is found in Mr. Cureton's Syriac version.

^e Tertull. ad Uxor. ii. c. 2-9; de Monogam. c. 11. "Unde sufficiamus ad enarrandam felicitatem ejus matrimonii, quod ecclesia conciliat, et confirmat oblatio, et obsignat benedictio," &c. &c.: compare Augusti, Denk-

würdigkeiten, x. p. 288.

^f This was a voluntary rite, superinduced by Christian manners upon the law of the realm.

^g On forbidden marriages. Caius i. 58-62; Ulpian, v. 6; Collat. Leg. Mosai. vi. 4-17; J. C. de Nupt. 5. 4, 1 to 5.

of Moses. That law prohibited the union of brothers with sisters, of uncles and aunts with nephews and nieces : it did not proscribe that of cousins german.^h The Roman law extended this prohibition to connexions formed by affinity and by adoption. Connexions formed by marriage were as sacred as those of natural kindred, and an union with an adopted brother or sister was as inflexibly forbidden as in the case of blood.

But of the few passages in the Code of Justinian which reveal the Christian legislator, that extraordinary one stands out in peculiar contrast, which extends the prohibited degrees to spiritual relationship. But the manner, almost as it were furtive, in which this prohibition is introduced, shows how it grew out of the existing state of Roman feeling. The jealous law had prohibited, besides the incestuous degrees of relationship, the union of a guardian, or the son of a guardian, with his ward.ⁱ But a man might marry an alumna whom he had educated as a slave, but to whom he had afterwards granted liberty.^k The education as a slave implied that he had not towards her the affection of a parent. No one, however, would be so impious as to marry one

Spiritual relationships.

^h Plutarch, *Quæst. Rom.* 6 ; *Cicer. pro Cluent.* 5 ; *Capitol. M. Antonin.* The emperors Arcadius and Honorius married their cousins. *Instit. i. x.* The old law (*Caius, Instit. p. 27*) allowed a man to marry his niece on the brother's, not on the sister's side. The Emperor Claudius availed himself of this privilege. The Roman law, in fact, was not greatly extended by the canon law, the prohibitory degrees of which are summed up in these lines,—

* *Nata, soror, neptis, matertera patris, et nuxor, Et patrui conjux, mater, privigna, noverca.*

Uxorisque soror, privigni nata, nurusque, Atque soror patris conjungilege vetantur."

ⁱ *Cod. Justin. v. 6, 1 et 7.*

^k *Cod. Justin. v. 4, 26.* There were other civil prohibitions : marriage of freeman with slave (see above), with a freed man or woman, by the Julian law confined to senators and their children (*Inst. 16, de Sponsal. ; Justinian Cod. de Nupt. 28, 5, 4*), of senators with actors (*Ulpian. xiii. 1. xvi. 2*) or persons of infamous occupations, &c. &c.—See *Walter, p. 539.*

whom he had brought up in his house as a daughter. On this principle it was that, whether brought up in his family or not, the sponsorship in baptism implied an affection so tender and parental as to render such a marriage unholy.

Roman pride and rigid Christian morality would concur in some of those prohibitions which interdicted free Romans from certain degrading or disreputable marriages. There could be no marriages with slaves: children born from that concubinage were servile. The Emperor Valentinian further defined low and abject persons who might not aspire to lawful union with free-men—actresses, daughters of actresses, tavern-keepers, the daughters of tavern-keepers, procurers (*lenones*) or gladiators, or those who had kept a public shop.¹

The Roman law had gradually expanded from that exclusive patrician haughtiness which would not recognise the marriage with plebeians: it had admitted unions between all of Roman birth; but till Roman citizenship had been imparted to the whole Roman Empire, it would not acknowledge marriage with barbarians to be more than concubinage. Cleopatra was called only in scorn the wife of Antony. Berenice might not presume to be more than the mistress of Titus. The Christian world closed marriages again within still more and more jealous limits. Interdictory statutes declared marriages with Jews and heathens not only invalid but adulterous. The Councils condemned marriages with heretics in terms almost of equal rigour. The legislature was silent; though Manicheans especially, being outcasts by the law, marriages with them must have been of questionable validity.^m

¹ All this, however, was in the spirit of the ancient Roman law. ^m Cod. Theodos. iii. 7, 2, ix. 7, 5
xvi. viii. 6; Cod. Justin. i. 9, 6

Yet, however lofty the theory of the Roman lawyers as to the sanctity and perpetual obligation of marriage, it was practically annulled by the admitted right and by the inveterate usage of divorce. It was a contract which either party might dissolve, almost without alleged cause. In the older law, the wife being, like the rest of his family, the property of the husband, he might dismiss her at any time from his service. Even the law of the Twelve Tables admitted divorce. But the severer morals of the older Republic disdained to assert this privilege. The sixth century of Roman greatness is said to have begun, before the public feeling was shocked by the repudiation of a virtuous but barren wife by Spurius Carvilius Ruga.ⁿ But in the later Republic the frequency of divorce was at once the sign, the cause, and the consequence of the rapid depravation of morals. Paulus Æmilius discarded the beautiful Papyria with a scornful refusal to assign any reason.^o Cato, Cicero, exchanged or dismissed their wives. And the wives were not behind their husbands in vindicating their equal rights. Paula Valeria repudiated her husband without cause to become the wife of Decimus Brutus.^p Augustus might endeavour by laws and by immunities to compel or allure the reluctant

Divorce.

These laws, in the time of Augustine and Jerome, were by no means unnecessary. "At nunc pleræque contemnentes apostoli jussionem, junguntur gentilibus et templa Christi idolis prostituunt, nec intelligunt se corporis ejus partem esse cujus et costæ sunt."—Hieron. In Jovin. i. 10: compare Augustin. de fid. et oper. c. 19. They gradually, as heathenism expired, became less denunciatory against such marriages, but maintained

and even increased their rigour against Jewish connexions.—Concil. Laodic. x.; but add xxxi.; Concil. Agath. lvii.; Concil. Arelat. xi.; Illiber. xvi. xvii.

ⁿ Dion. Hal. ii. 93; Val. Max. ii. 1; Aulus Gellius, iv. 3. Plutarch in Numâ.

^o "My shoes are new and well-made, but no one knows where they pinch me."—Plutarch. Vit. Paul. Æmil.

^p Cic. ad Fam.

aristocracy of Rome to marriage; he might limit divorce by statute:^a but his example more powerfully counteracted his own laws. He compelled the husband of Livia to divorce her during a state of pregnancy, and by marrying her became the father of a doubtful offspring. Mæcenas changed his wives as he changed his dress.^b Seneca, in his lofty Stoic morality, declares that the noble women of Rome calculated the year not by the Consuls, but by their husbands.^c Juvenal, in the bitterness of his satire, might describe the husband discarding his wife for the slightest infirmity;^d Martial might point an epigram against these legal adulteries;^e and all these writers might dwell, and with licensed exaggeration, only, or principally, on the manners of the capital and those of the higher orders; but throughout the Roman world there can be no doubt that this dissolution of those bonds which unite the family was the corroding plague of Roman society. Christianity must have subjugated public feeling to a great extent; it must have overawed, and softened, and rendered attractive the marriage state by countless examples in every part of the Empire (like that so beautifully described by Tertullian),^f far more than by its monastic notions of the superior dignity of virginity, before even Constantine could venture on his prohibitory law against divorce. Marriage was absolutely annulled by three causes, retirement to a monastic life, impotence, and captivity. The period at which captivity dissolved the tie, and permitted the husband

^a See the *lex Papia Poppæa*.

^b "Qui uxorem millies duxit." Such is the hyperbole of Seneca, who hated, perhaps because he envied, the memory of Mæcenas. "Quotidiana repudia."—*De Provid.* c. 3.

^c Senec. *de Benef.* iii. 16.

^d "Conlige sarcinulas, dicet libertus, et exi; Jam gravis es nobis, et saepe emungeris, exi Ocius et propera: sicco venit altera naso."—*Sat.* vi. 146.

^e "Quæ nubit toties, non nubit, adultera lege est."—vi. 7.

^f *Ad uxor.* ii. c. 9.

or the wife to marry again, was differently defined in successive statutes. The divorce law of Constantine limited repudiation to three causes: against the husband, if he was a homicide, a magician, a violator of tombs.⁷ In either of these cases the wife recovered her dowry. If she sued for a divorce for any other cause, she forfeited her dowry, her jewels, even to the bodkin of her hair, and was sentenced to deportation into a desert island. Against the wife the three crimes were adultery, witchcraft, or acting as procuress. If the husband repudiated her for one of these causes he retained the dowry; if for any other the penalty was the forfeiture of the dowry. If he married again, the repudiated wife might enter his house and seize the dowry of the new bride. But the severity of this law was mitigated by Honorius,⁸ its penalties abrogated by Theodosius the younger. This law, which is recited in the Code and in the Novellæ of Justinian, adds to the causes which justify divorce: on the part of the wife, if the husband is guilty of adultery, high treason, or forgery, sacrilege, pillage of churches, robbery or harbouring robbers, cattle-driving, man-stealing, having, to the disgrace of his family, connexion with loose women in the sight of his wife, attempting her life by poison or violence, or scourging her in a manner insupportable to a freewoman. On the part of the husband, besides all these, frequenting the banquets of strangers without his knowledge or consent, passing the night abroad without just cause or permission, or indulging in the Circus, the theatre, or the amphitheatre, without his leave.^a

⁷ Cod. Theod. de repud. iii. xvi.

⁸ Novell. xvii. de repudiis ad calc. cod. Theodos. Ritter observes that the constitutions were not annulled by this

edict, only the penalties.

^a Cod. v. xvii.; Pandects, xxiv. ii.; Novellæ, xxii. cxvii. cxxxiv. The Institutes avoid the subject.

The legislation of Justinian is obviously embarrassed with the difficulty of the question of repudiation: it re-enacts, but with some hesitation, the severe statutes of Theodosius: a succession of new laws explains, restricts, or confirms the plainer language of the Code. Justinian, indeed, first extended the penalties of the laws against divorce to cases of marriage without dower: if the husband repudiated an undowered wife without just cause, he forfeited to her one-fourth of his property.^b But the successor of Justinian was compelled to sweep away all these provisions, and to restore the liberty of divorce by mutual consent. The Emperor, as the law declares, was beset by complaints and remonstrances, that inextinguishable hatred was implanted in families by these restrictions, that secret poisonings would become common: he resisted long, but was compelled to yield to the general clamour. The manners of Constantinople, perhaps of the Roman world, triumphed over the severer authority of the Church.

Concubinage, a kind of inferior marriage, of which the issue were natural children not bastards, Concubinage. had been, to a certain extent, legalised by Augustus. The Christian Emperors endeavoured to give something of the dignity of legitimate marriage to this union, by enlarging the rights of natural children to succession; but in the East it was not abolished, as a legal union, till the time of Leo the Philosopher; in the West it was perpetuated by the pride of the conquering races, and in some respects by the practice of the clergy themselves to a much later period.^c

^b Cod. v. xvii. ii. To the first causes were added, endeavour to procure abortion, and indecent bathing in the public baths with men.

^c Ducange, art. Concubina.

That primeval constitution of Roman society, which made each family a little state, with its peculiar sacrifices and peculiar jurisdiction, of ^{Parental power.} which the father was Priest and King, had long fallen into disuse. The parental power, in theory absolute, had been limited by public feeling and long desuetude. Even under the old republic, Brutus and Manlius were magistrates and generals as well as fathers; the execution of their sons was a sacrifice to Roman liberty and to Roman discipline, not an exertion of parental authority. Erixo, a Roman knight in the time of Seneca, whose son died under his chastisement, was pursued through the forum by the infuriated people.^d Alexander Severus limited the parental power by law. It was well perhaps for human nature that this change had taken place before the promulgation of Christianity. It was spared those domestic martyrdoms which might have taken place in many families. For that which the divine wisdom of its founder had foreshown was inevitable. Youth, in its prospective ardour, would be more prone to accept the new religion, than age, rigidly attached to ancient and established usages. It is the constant reproach with which the apologists of Christianity have to contend, that it nurtured filial disobedience, and taught children to revolt against the authority of parents.^e But this conflict was over long before Christianity entered into Roman legislation. The life of the child was as sacred as that of the parent; and Constantine, when he branded the murder of a son with the name of parricide, hardly advanced upon the dominant feeling. Some power remained of moderate chastisement, but even this was liable to the control of law.

^d Seneca de Clement. i. 14.

^e Tertull. Apologet. c. 3; Origen | contra Cels.; Hieronym. Epist. ad Lætam.

Disinheritance remained the only penalty which the father could arbitrarily inflict upon the son; for by degrees that absolute possession of all the property of the son which of old belonged to the father had been limited. The peculium over which full power was vested in the son was extended by Augustus, Trajan, and Hadrian to all which he might acquire in military service, even to captives who became his slaves, to be disposed of by gift or will; by Constantine and later Emperors to all emoluments obtained in civil employments; by Justinian to the inheritance, in certain cases, of the mother's property.

Infanticide was thus a crime by law, but the sale and exposure of children, the most obstinate vestige of the arbitrary parental power, aggravated by the increasing misery of the times, still contended with the humane severity of the laws, and the fervent denunciations of the Christian teachers.^f The sale of children was prohibited by law, yet prevailed to late times. The Emperor Trajan had declared that a free born child, exposed by its parents and brought up by a stranger, did not forfeit its liberty.^g The Christian Emperor first declared exposure of infants a crime;^h at the same time he declared the children of such poor parents as should be unable to nourish them, children of the state, to be clothed and supported by the public treasury. This

^f Athenagor. Apologet. Tertullian, Apologet. 9; Lactantius, D. I. vi. 20.

^g Pliny, Epist. x. 7.

^h The Cod. Justin. iv. 43, 1, confirmed the declaration of the law by Diocletian. "Liberos a parentibus neque venditionis neque donationis titulo, neque pignoris jure, aut alio quolibet modo, nec sub prætectu

ignorantiæ accipientes, in alium transferri posse, manifestissimi juris est." Yet in the life of Paphnutius by Jerome we read: "Mihi est maritus qui fiscalis debiti gratiâ, suspensus est et flagellatus, ac pœnis omnibus cruciatus, servatur in carcere. Tres autem nobis filii fuerunt, qui pro ejusdem debiti necessitate distracti sunt."

vast poor law could not have been carried into effect, or was necessarily modified by new laws, providing for children thus exposed. The stranger who took up such child and maintained it, might, according to a law of Theodosius the Great, bring it up as his own son, or as his slave. The father who had exposed his child, having abandoned his paternal power, could not reclaim it; he, however, who had sold his child through poverty might redeem it by paying the same price, or replacing it by another slave. But one of Justinian's supplementary laws both shows the unrepressed frequency of the practice, and by its strong language the profound sense of its inhumanity. It was now the custom to leave the children not merely in the streets, but in the churches, in order, no doubt, to appeal to the kindness of the clergy and of the more pious worshippers. If, says the law, worn-out slaves, who are exposed by their masters, obtain their freedom, how much the rather free-born infants? But, as if aware that this was rather a penalty on the charitable person, who might undertake the care of such children (for whom it might be better to be brought up as slaves than left to perish), condign punishment is threatened, it is to be presumed the penalty for murder, against the guilty parties. It is probable, however, that the practice, though not so clearly traceable, expired but slowly in the East; in the West it still required the decrees of Councils and the edicts of sovereigns to extirpate this pertinacious crime.¹

B. Christianity made no change in the tenure or succession to property. The Christian churches succeeded to that sanctity which the ancient Law of property. law had attributed to the temples; as soon as they were

¹ Capit. vi. c. 142; Decret. Gregor. de exposit. lib. ii. 971, 972, 973.

consecrated they became public property, and could not be alienated to any other use. The ground itself was hallowed, and remained so even after the temple had been destroyed. This was an axiom of the heathen Papinian.^k Gifts to temples were alike inalienable, nor could they be pledged; the exception in the Justinian code betrays at once the decline of the Roman power, and the silent progress of Christian humanity. They could be sold or pledged for the redemption of captives, a purpose which the old Roman law would have disdained to contemplate.^l The burial of the dead made ground holy. This consecration might be made by any private person; but a public burial ground became, in a certain sense, public property.^m

The great law of Constantine, which enabled the Christian churches to receive gifts and bequests, was but an extension or transference of the right belonging to heathen templesⁿ and priesthoods, many of which were endowed with large estates.^o Even during the reign of Constantine some parts of the estates of the

^k Instit. ii. 1, 8. Papinian lived under the reign of Severus.

^l Property might be bequeathed in general terms for the redemption of captives, c. i. 3, 48.

^m Instit. ii. 1, 9. If the owner gave consent, a body might be interred in any ground, which thereby became sacred; if the owner afterwards wished to withdraw his consent, he could not: his right was lost in the sanctity of the ground. Paolo Sarpi supposes, but quotes no authority, that the churches had, even before Constantine, received lands by bequest, but contrary to law. They were confiscated by Diocletian. The following is a law

of Diocletian and Maximian, A.D. 290:

"Collegium, si nullo speciali privilegio subnixum sit, hæreditatem capere non posse, dubium non est."—C. 8 de hæred. instit.; Sarpi Opere, iv. 71.

ⁿ A law in the Justinian code declares all gifts or bequests to heathen persons or places (*i. e.* priests and temples) null and void.—Leo. i. 11, 9.

^o On the church property of the ancients see the curious passage in Appian. During the pressure of the Mithridatic war, Sylla sold as much of the property devoted to sacrifices as produced 2000 pounds of gold.—De Bello Mithrid., c. xxi.

heathen temples were made over to the Christians: but the private offerings of the faithful, by donation and by will, poured in with boundless prodigality. Already hæridipety, seeking inheritances by undue means, is branded as an ecclesiastical vice by the severer teachers, and restrained by law:^p already the abuses of wealth begin to appear. The Apostolic Constitutions enact that the property of the bishop should be kept distinct from that of his see,^q his own he may bequeath by will to his wife, his children, or other heirs; the property of the Church is to descend sacred and inviolate. Already bishops are reproached, as too much involved in worldly affairs; Councils declare that they must be relieved from the administration of the temporal concerns of their churches; a steward or œconomus must be appointed in each church for this end.^r The sovereigns, instead of endeavouring to set bounds to this tide of wealth which was setting into the Church, to the loss of the imperial exchequer, swelled it by their own munificence, as well as by the tenor of their laws. They dared not incur the reproach at once of want of respect to the clergy, of parsimony to the poor, of stinting the magnificence of the edifices, now everywhere rising for the honour of God. These were the three acknowledged purposes to which were devoted the ecclesiastical revenues.

The legislation of Justinian confirmed all the provisions of former Christian emperors for the security and enlargement of ecclesiastical wealth. A law of Leo and Anthemius was the primary palladium of Church

^p Hieronymus in Nepot., Epist. xxxiv. The law of Valentinian. See page 90.

^q Apostol. Constit. can. 33.

^r Chrys. Hom. lxxxvi. in Matthæum. Concil. Antioch., Synod. Chalced. can. 23.

property. It declared every kind of property in land, in houses or rents, in moveables, in peasants or slaves, absolutely inalienable even with the concurrent consent of the bishop, the steward, and all the clergy. All such sacrilegious alienations by gift, bequest, or exchange, were absolutely null and void. The steward guilty of such alienation lost his office, and was bound to make good the loss out of his own property. The notaries who drew such deeds were condemned to perpetual exile; the judges who confirmed them lost their office and forfeited all their property.^s The lease or usufruct only could be granted under certain precise stipulations.

A law of Valentinian and Marcian empowered all widows, deaconesses, or nuns to bequeath to any church, chapel, body of clergy, monastery, or to the poor, the whole or any part of their property. Zeno enacted that if any one had bestowed any property on any martyr, prophet, or angel, to build a house of prayer; in case he died before the work was finished, his heirs were bound to complete it.^t The same applied to caravansaries, hospitals, or almshouses. The bishop or his officers might exact the completion to the full.^u Justinian recognises bequests simply to Jesus Christ, which might be claimed by the principal church of the city; and

* "Nec si omnes cum religioso episcopo et œconomo clerici in eorum possessionum alienationem consentiant."—c. i. 2. xiv. This law, which was originally limited to the church of Constantinople, was re-enacted with some slight alterations by Anastatius and by Justinian.—Constit. 7. Justinian extended this law to the whole empire, including the West.—Nov. 7.

Const. ix. These two constitutions (c. i. 11, 24) gave the right of claiming bequests to the church for 100 years; this was afterwards limited to 40.—Nov. Constit. iii. 131-36. The emperor might, for the public good, receive church property in exchange, giving more valuable property.—Nov. 7.

^s C. i. 2, xv.

^u C. i. 3, 45.

bequests made to any archangel or saint, without specified place, went to the nearest church dedicated to that angel or saint.^x

Founders of churches possessed the right of patronage, but the bishop might refuse an unqualified priest.^y

All church property was declared free from baser services, and from extraordinary contributions.

Thus the Church might constantly receive and never depart from property; and thus began its immunities from public burthens. In the rapid change of masters, undergone in far the larger part of the Roman world, property of all kinds was constantly accumulating in the hands of the Church, which rarely, except through fraud or force, relaxed its grasp. The Church was the sole proprietor, whom forfeiture or confiscation could never reach; whose title was never antiquated; before whose hallowed boundaries violence stood rebuked; whom the law guarded against her own waste or prodigality; to whom it was the height of piety, almost ensured salvation, to give or to bequeath, sacrilege to despoil or to defraud; whose property if alienated was held under a perpetual curse, which either withered its harvest, or brought disaster and ruin on the wrongful possessor.

C. The penal laws of the Roman Empire, excepting in the inflexible distinction drawn between the freeman and the slave, were not immoderately severe, nor especially barbarous in the execution of punishment. In this respect Christianity introduced no great mitigation. The abolition of crucifixion as a punishment by Constantine was an act rather of religious reverence than of humanity. Another law of Constantine, if more rigor-

^x Cod. l. 2, 26

^y Nov. 123. Nov. Constit. 57, 2.

ously just, sanctions the cruel iniquity, which continued for centuries of Christian legislature—the torture. No one could be executed for a capital crime, murder, magic, adultery, except after his own confession, or the unanimous confession of all persons interrogated or submitted to torture.²

Some crimes were either made capital or more rigidly and summarily punished with death by the abhorrence of Christianity for sensual indulgences. The violation of virgins, widows, or deaconesses professing a religious life, was made a capital offence, to be summarily punished.³

The crime against nature, the deep reproach of Greek and Roman manners, was capitally punished.⁴

But remarkable powers had been given by former Emperors, and enlarged by Justinian, or rather, it was made part of the episcopal function, to visit every month the state prisons, to inquire into the offences of all persons committed, and to admonish the civil authorities to proceed according to the law.⁵ Private prisons were prohibited; the bishop was empowered to order all such illegal places of confinement to be broken open, and the prisoners set free.⁶

In certain points the bishops were the legal as well as the spiritual guardians of public morality. They had power to suppress gaming of certain prohibited kinds.⁷ With the presidents of the provinces they might prevent women from being forced to appear on

² By the Justinian code, Nov. cxxiii. c. 31, torture (*βάσανοι*) and exile were the punishment of any one who insulted a bishop or presbyter in the church. The disturbance of the sacred rites was a capital offence.

³ Cod. i. 3, 53.

⁴ Two bishops were publicly executed for this offence by Justinian.—Theophanes, p. 27.

⁵ Cod. i. 4, 22.

⁶ Cod. i. 4, 22.

⁷ Cod. ii. 4, 14.

the stage, or from being retained against their will in that dangerous and infamous profession.^f If the president, in his office of purveyor for the public amusement, should be the person in fault, the bishop was to act of himself, either of his own authority or by appeal to the Emperor.

A new class of crimes, if not introduced by Christianity, became multiplied, rigorously defined, mercilessly condemned. The ancient Roman theory, that the religion of the State must be the religion of the people, which Christianity had broken to pieces by its inflexible resistance, was restored in more than its former rigour. The code of Justinian confirmed the laws of Theodosius and his successors, which declared certain heresies, Manicheism and Donatism, crimes against the State, as affecting the common welfare. The crime was punishable by confiscation of all property, and incompetency to inherit or to bequeath. Death did not secure the hidden heretic from prosecution; as for high treason, he might be convicted in his grave. Not only was his testament invalid, but inheritance could not descend through him. All who harboured such heretics were liable to punishment; their slaves might desert them, and transfer themselves to an orthodox master.^g The list of proscribed heretics gradually grew wider. The Manicheans were driven still farther away from the sympathies of mankind; by one Greek constitution they were condemned to capital punishment. Near thirty names of less detested heretics are recited in a law of Theodosius the younger, to which were added, in the time of Justinian, Nestorians, Eutychians, Apollinarians. The books of all these sects

^f De Episcop. Audient. ii. 4, §3.

^g Cod. de Hæret. i. 5, 11.

were to be burned; yet the formidable number of these heretics made, no doubt, the general execution of the laws impossible. But the Justinian code, having defined as heretics all who do not believe the Catholic faith, declares such heretics, as well as Pagans, Jews, and Samaritans, incapable of holding civil or military offices, except in the lowest ranks of the latter;^h they could attain to no civic dignity which was held in honour, as that of the defensors, though such offices as were burthensome might be imposed even on Jews.ⁱ The assemblies of all heretics were forbidden, their books were to be collected and burned, their rites, baptisms, and ordinations prohibited.^k Children of heretical parents might embrace orthodoxy; the males the parent could not disinherit, to the females he was bound to give an adequate dowry.^m The testimony of Manicheans, or Samaritans, and Pagans could not be received; apostates to any of these sects and religions lost all their former privileges, and were liable to all penalties.ⁿ

II. The Barbaric Laws^o differed from those of the empire in this important point. The Roman jurisprudence issued entirely from the will of the Emperor.^p The ancient laws, whether of the

Barbaric
codes.

^h There was an exception for the Goths in the service of the Empire.

ⁱ Cod. i. ix. 5. ^k Cod. i. 5, 21.

^m Cod. i. 5, 21. ⁿ Cod. i. 7.

^o All the barbarian codes are in Latin, but German words are perpetually introduced for offices and usages purely Teutonic.—Wergelda, Rachimbürg. See Eichhorn, Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte, i. p. 232. See curious extract from Lombard Law on manumission, p. 331 The collection

which I have chiefly used is the latest, that of Canciani, *Leges Barbarorum*, Venice, 1781.

^p Many Christians, even of honourable birth, according to Salvian, fled from the cruel oppressions of the Roman law, no doubt the fiscal part, and took refuge among the heathen barbarians. “*Inter hæc vastantur pauperes, viduæ gemunt, orphani proculcantur, in tantum ut multi eorum et non obscuris natalibus editi et liber-*

Republic or of his imperial predecessors, received their final sanction, as comprehended within his code: the answers of the great lawyers, the accredited legal maxims, obtained their perpetuity, and became the permanent statutes of the realm through the same authority. The barbaric were national codes, framed and enacted by the King, with the advice and with the consent of the great council of his nobles, the flower and representative of the nation.¹ They were the laws of the people as well as of the King. As by degrees the bishops became nobles, as they were summoned or took their place in the great council, their influence becomes more distinct and manifest: they are joint legislators with the King and the nobles, and their superior intelligence,² as the only lettered class, gives them great opportunity of modifying, in the interest of religion or in their own, the statutes of the rising kingdoms. This, however, was of a later period. The earliest of these codes, the Edict of Theodoric, is so entirely

aliter instituti ad hostes fugiunt, ne persecutionis publicæ afflictione moriantur, quærentes scilicet apud barbaros Romanum humanum, quia apud Romanos barbaram inhumanitatem ferre non possunt. Et quamvis ab his, ad quos confugiunt, discrepent ritu, discrepent linguâ, ipso etiam, ut ita dicam, corporum atque induviarum barbaricarum fœtore dissentiant, malunt tamen in barbaris pati cultum dissimilem, quam in Romanis injustitiam sævientem."—De Gub. Dei, lib. v.

¹ "Hoc decretum est apud Regem et principes ejus, et apud cunctum populum Christianum, qui infra regnum Merovingorum consistunt."—Præf. ad

Leg. Ripuar. The Salic law is that of the Gens Francorum inclyta, among whose praises it is that they had subdued those Romans, who burned or slew the martyrs, while the Franks adorn their reliques with gold and precious stones.—Præf. ad Leg. Salic.

² The first instance of this is in the preface to the code of Alaric. "Utilitates populi nesti propitiâ divinitate tractantes, hoc quoque quod in legibus videbatur iniquum meliori deliberatione corrigimus, ut omnis legum Romanarum et antiqui juris obscuritas, adhibitis sacerdotibus et nobilibus viris, in lucem intelligentiæ melioris deductoresplendeat."

Roman, that it can scarcely be called barbaric jurisprudence. It is Roman in its general provisions, in its language, in its penalties ; it is Roman in the supreme and imperial power of legislation assumed by the King : there is, in fact, no Ostrogothic code. The silence as to ecclesiastical matters in the edicts of Theodoric and Athalaric arises from the peculiar position of Theodoric, an Arian sovereign in the midst of Catholicism dominant in Rome and throughout Italy.^s But there is a singular illustration of the theory of ecclesiastical power, as vested in the temporal sovereign. The Arian Athalaric, the son of Theodoric, at the request of the Pope himself, issues a strong edict against simony, which by his command is affixed, with a decree of the Senate to the same effect, before the porch of St. Peter's. The points in which the Ostrogothic edict departs from the Roman law are : I. The stronger difference drawn between the crimes of the nobles and of the inferior classes. Already the Teutonic principle of estimating all crimes at a certain pecuniary amount, according to the social rank of the injured person, the *wehrgelt*, is beginning to appear, as well as its consequence, that he who could not pay by money must pay by his life.^t False witness is punished with death in the poor, by a fine in the rich ; the incendiary is burned alive if a slave or serf,^u if free he has only to replace the amount of damage ; should he be insolvent, he is condemned to beating and exile. Wizards, if of honourable birth, were punished with exile ; if of humbler descent, with death ; while a free-born adulteress was sentenced to death, in a vile and

^s There are some provisions favourable to the church borrowed from the Roman law. The church inherited all

the property of clergy dying intestate —xxvii. ; apud Canciani, i. p. 15.

^t xc. 1.

^u xcvii. colonus.

vulgar woman the crime was venial.⁷ In seduction, the seducer was obliged to marry the woman; if married, to endow her with a third of his estate; if ignoble, he suffered death.⁸ II. The Edict, in the severity of its punishments, exceeds the Roman law, especially, as might be expected, among the Goths, in all crimes relating to the violation of chastity. Capital punishments were multiplied, and capital punishments almost unknown to the Roman law. The author of sedition in the city or the camp was to be burned alive.⁹ The male adulterer was to be burned, the female capitally punished.² Death was enacted against pagans, sooth-sayers, low-born wizards; against destroyers of tombs, against kidnappers of free men, against forgery, against the judge who sentenced contrary to law;^a against robbery of churches, or forcibly dragging persons thence, death.^b

Not only were adulterers capitally punished, but whoever lent his house for the perpetration of the crime, or persuaded the woman to its perpetration.^c Rape of a free-woman or virgin was death, which extended to all who were aiding or abetting. Parents neglecting to prosecute for rape on a girl under age were condemned to exile. The consenting female suffered death.^d

The law of divorce, however, remained Roman: it admitted the same causes, and was limited by the same restrictions.^e The Edict of Athalaric against concubinage reduced the children of the free-born concubine to slavery. The slave-concubine was in the power of

⁷ lxii. ⁸ lix. ⁹ cvii. ^a lxi. ^b li. | himself from a charge of adultery by
^b cxv. ^c xxxix. So also the Lombard Law, ccxii. A man might defend | an oath or by his champion.—ccxiv.
^d xvii. xviii. ^e liv.

the matron, who might inflict any punishment short of bloodshed. Polygamy was expressly forbidden.^f

The Lombard laws are issued by King Rotharis,^g with the advice of his nobles.^h The Burgundian, in their whole character, are intermediate between the Roman and Barbaric jurisprudence. The bishops first appear as

Clergy co-legislators. France Alaric the Visigoth adopts the abridgment of the Roman law, by the advice of his priests as well as of his nobles.ⁱ But it is in Spain, after the Visigoths had cast off their Arianism, that the bishops more manifestly influence the whole character of the legislation. The synods of Toledo were not merely national councils, but parliaments of the realm.^k After the ecclesiastical affairs had been transacted, the bishops and nobles met together, and with the royal sanction enacted laws.^m The people gave their assent. The King himself is subject to the Visigothic law. The unlawful usurper of the Crown is subject to ecclesiastical as well as to civil penalties, to excommunication as well as to death. Even ecclesiastics consenting to such treason are to be involved in the interdict. These ecclesiastical lawgivers, while they arm themselves with great powers for the public good, claim no immunity. Bishops are liable to fines for disregard of judge's orders.ⁿ The

^f VII. vi.

^g The laws of Rotharis were written seventy-six years after the invasion of Italy by the Lombards. The Lombards, it must be remembered, were still Arians. The church, therefore, is not co-legislative with the nobles.

^h "Cum primatibus meis iudicibus."—Præfat. in Canciani, vol. i.

ⁱ "Adhibitis sacerdotibus ac nobilibus viris;" compare Canciani, in

Præfat. p. xiii. Eichhorn, not reckoning the Edict of Theodoric, arranges the codes thus: I. Lex Visigothica—the origin of the Fuero Juzgo—which, however, has many late additions. II. Lex Salica. III. The Burgundian. IV. Ripuarica, Alemannica, Bavarica. These betray higher kingly power.

^k Canciani, iv. p. 52.

^m Leges Visigoth. x. 1, 6.

ⁿ ii. 1, 18, *ibid*.

clergy are amenable to the same penalty for contumacy as the laity.^o But great powers are given to the bishops to restrain unjust judges, even the counts.^p The terrible laws against heresy, and the atrocious juridical persecutions of the Jews, already designate Spain as the throne and centre of merciless bigotry.

The Salic law proclaims itself that of the noble nation of the Franks, lately converted to the Catholic faith, and even while yet barbarians untainted with heresy. In a later sentence it boasts that it has enshrined in gold and precious stones the reliques of those martyrs whom the Romans burned with fire, slew with the sword, or cast to the wild beasts.^q But it is the law of the King and the nobles: the bishops are not named, perhaps because as yet the higher clergy were still of Roman descent.

Salic law.

Still, however, the Teutonic kings and Teutonic legislators at first perhaps in their character of conquerors, assumed supreme dominion over the Church as well as over the State, and the subject bishops bowed before the irresistible authority. St. Remigius violated a canon of the Church on the ordination of a presbyter at the command of Clovis.^r Among the successors of Clovis no bishop was appointed without the sanction of the Crown.^s Theodoric, son of Clovis, commanded the elevation of St. Nicetius to the see of Treves.^t The royal

^o ii. l. 29, 30.

^p In the Visigothic code the observance of the Sunday and of holydays is appointed by law. The holydays were fifteen at Easter, seven before, seven after; the Nativity, Circumcision, Epiphany, Pentecost, Ascension, and certain days at harvest and vintage time.

^q Apud Canciani, vol. ii. see p. 370.

^r "Scribitis canonicum non fuisse quod jussit. . . . Præsul regionum, custos patriæ, gentium triumphator illud injunxit."—Epist. S. Remigii; Bouquet, iv. p. 52.

^s Planck, ii. 114. A.D. 529.

^t "Eum ad episcopatum misit consecrari."—Gr. Tur.

power was shown in the shameless sale of bishoprics." The nomination or the assent of the clergy and the people was implied in the theory of the election, but often overborne by the awe of the royal authority.^x The Council of Orleans, which condemned the sale of bishoprics, fully acknowledged the supremacy of the royal will. A few years later a Council at Paris endeavoured to throw off the yoke. It declared the election to be in the clergy and the people. It disclaimed the royal mandate, and condemned the bishop who should dare to obtain ordination through the King to be excluded from the fellowship of the bishops of the province.^y But the fierce Frankish sovereigns, while they appeared to accede to these pretensions, trampled them under foot. The right seems to follow them in their career of conquest. Dalmatius, Bishop of Rhodéz, in his last will, besought the King, under the most terrible adjurations, not to grant his office to a foreigner, a covetous person, or a married man.^z In 562 a Synod, held under Leontius, Archbishop of Bordeaux, deposed the Bishop Emerius, as consecrated by a decree of King Chlotaire without his sanction. When the new Bishop Herculus presented himself at Paris, "What!" exclaimed King Charibert, "do men think that there is

^x "Jam tunc germen illud iniquum cœperat fructificare, ut sacerdotium aut venderetur a regibus, aut compararetur a clericis."—Greg. Tur. Vit. Patr. vi. 3.

^y "Ut nulli episcopatum præmiis aut comparatione liceat adipisci: sed cum voluntate regi: juxta electionem cleri ac plebis," &c. A.D. 549. Concil. Can. 10.

^z "Nullus civibus invitis ordinetur episcopus, nisi quem populi et clerico-

rum electio plenissimâ quæsierit voluntate. *Non principis imperio, neque per quamlibet conditionem, contra metropolis voluntatem vel episcoporum provincialium ingeratur. Quod si per ordinationem regiam honoris istius culmen pervadere aliquis nimîa temeritate præsumpserit, a comprovincialibus loci ipsius episcopus recipi nullatenus mereatur, quem indebitè ordinatum agnoscent.*"—Can. viii.

^x Gregor. Tur. v. 47.

no son of Chlotaire to maintain his father's decrees, that ye dare to degrade a bishop appointed by his will?" He ordered the rash intruder to be thrown into a cart strewn with thorns, and so sent into banishment; the Bishop Emerius to be reinstated by holy men.^a He fined the Synod. The royal prerogative was perpetually asserted down at least to the time of Charlemagne.^b

In the Gothic kingdom of Spain, so long as it was Arian, the kings interfered not in the appointment of bishops. Their orthodox successors left, it should seem, affairs to take their own course.^c But towards the close of the seventh century the Council of Toledo acknowledged the King as invested with the right of electing bishops.^d Ecclesiastical synods were only held by royal permission. Their decrees required the royal sanction.^e This theory may be traced through the numerous synods for ecclesiastical purposes in Gaul, between the conquest and the close of the sixth century.^f In Spain the custom appears distinctly recognised even under Arian kings.^g

^a Gregor. Tur. iv. 26. Loebel observes that Gregory, from his expression, "*Et sic principis ultus est injuriam*," thought the king in the right.

^b See instances in Loebel. King Guntran, in 584, rejected (it seemed an extraordinary case) gifts for episcopal appointments. "*Non est principatus nostri consuetudo sacerdotium venundare sub pretio, sed nec vestrum cum præmiis comparare: ne et nos turpis lucri infamiâ notemur, et vos mago Simoni comparemini.*"—Greg. Tur. vi. 39.

^c Pope Hilarius laid before a synod at Rome a letter of the Tarragonian bishops complaining that in the other

provinces of Spain episcopal elections had ceased. The bishop nominated his successor in his testament.—Baion. sub. ann. 466.

^d "*Quod regiæ potestatis sit episcopos eligere.*"

^e Planck, ch. ii. p. 125; from 511 to 590, were held twenty-one Gallic synods: most of them have permission "*gloriosissimi regis*," or some such phrase.

^f Planck, note, page 130.

^g King Theudes, in 531, permits the orthodox bishops "*in Toledanam urbem convenire, et quæcunque ad ecclesiasticam disciplinam pertinerent dicere, licenterque dicere.*"—Isid. in Chron. ad A.D. 531.

As under the Roman law no one could elude civil office by retreating into holy orders. No decurion could be ordained without special permission. No free-man could be ordained in the Barbaric kingdoms without the consent of the King, because thereby the king lost his military service.^h

Below the sovereign power the people maintained the right of the joint election of bishops with the clergy. This old Christian usage would fall in with the Teutonic habits. As the Teutons raised their king upon the buckler, and proclaimed him with the assent of the freemen of the tribe, so the acclamation of the people ratified or anticipated the nomination of the bishop.ⁱ

The clergy enjoyed no immunity from the laws of the land.^k In criminal cases two successive Councils, at Macon and at Poitiers,^m acknowledged that for all criminal offences, as homicide, robbery, witchcraft, to which the latter adds adultery, they were amenable to the civil jurisdiction.ⁿ At a later period the presence of the bishop was declared necessary.^o If indeed the awe of the clergy might repress, or the obstinate claim to immunity embarrass, the ordinary judge, the royal

^h Conc. Aurelian. A.D. 511, can. 6. confirmed by a capitulary, A.D. 805. I. c. 114.—Marculf. i. 19.—*Præceptum de Clericatu*.—Planck, 159.

ⁱ For the usage under the Roman dominion in Gaul, from the earliest period to the fifth century, see Raynouard, *Histoire du Droit Municipal en France*, i. ch. xxvi. It continued to the twelfth century.

^k The appeal of the clergy to the civil courts for the redress of ecclesiastical grievances was strictly for-

bidden.—Concil. Tolet. iii. 13. Conc. Paris. A.D. 589. c. 13. Council under Recared, enacted, "*Ne amplius liceat clericis conclericos suos relicto Pontifice ad judicia secularia pertrahere.*"—A.D. 589. c. 13.

^m Concil. Matiscon. A.D. 581. Concil. Pictav.

ⁿ According to Gregory of Tours, Count Leudastes of Tours had, almost every day, when he sat in justice priests brought before him in chains.—Lib. v. c. 49. ^o Capit. i. 23.

authority was neither limited by fear nor scruple.^p Numerous instances occur of bishops treated with the most cruel indignity by the fierce Frankish sovereigns for real or imputed crimes.^q At times indeed they submitted to the tardier process of a previous condemnation by an ecclesiastical synod. Prætextatus, Bishop of Rouen, was accused by King Chilperic as an accomplice in the rebellion of his son, before a synod in Paris. Prætextatus was in danger of being dragged from the church and stoned by the Franks. The bishops were prepared to utter the ban. But his defence was undertaken by the historian, Gregory of Tours. Neither fear nor bribery could deter the intrepid advocate from maintaining the innocence of the bishop.^r When the King could not obtain his condemnation,^s either the tearing his holy vesture, or the imprecation of the 108th Psalm against him, or even his exclusion from Christian communion, Prætextatus was suddenly hurried away to prison; on his attempt to escape, grievously beaten and sent into exile.^t This transaction, notwithstanding its melancholy close, shows some growing respect for ecclesiastical tribunals in cases even of high treason. The Spanish kings threaten bishops with royal as well as ecclesiastical censure.^u

There were appeals from ecclesiastical synods to

^p At the end of the sixth century the civil authorities in Spain took upon them to enforce clerical continence. They visited the houses of the clergy, and took out all suspicious females. With the consent of the bishops, who seem to have approved of this procedure, they might seize the women as slaves.—Concil. Hispal. 3.

^q Greg. Tur. vi. 24.

^r “Ducentas argenti libras promisit, si Prætextatus, me impugnante, opprimeretur.”

^s Gregory himself admits the supremacy of the king over the clergy. “Si quis de nobis, o rex, justitiæ tramitem transcendere voluerit a te corrigi potest; si vero tu excesseris, quis te corripiet?” ^t Greg. Tur. v. 18.

^u Planck, ii. 198.

the Crown; in some cases the royal authority interposed to mitigate or to relieve from ecclesiastical penalties.^x

But there is a strong converse to this subjection of the Church to the power of the King or the nobility. Already in the sixth and seventh centuries, the bishops appear in all the great assemblies of the people.^y They have a voice in the election of the King; before long, his coronation becomes a religious ceremony. It was not, according to one theory, that they succeeded the Druids of Gaul and the Teutonic priests in their dignity (the Druids and their religion had long ceased to maintain any influence, the German priests do not appear to have formed a part of the great warlike migrations of the tribes), nor that the bishops claimed the privilege of all free Franks to give their suffrage in the popular assembly. There were few of these regular parliaments; they were rather great councils summoned by the king. The position of the Bishops, their influence with the people, their rank in public estimation, their superior intelligence, designated them as useful members of such council. The later Gothic kings of Spain felt even more awe of the clergy: they had been rescued by their zeal, not merely from the terrible retribution which awaited heathenism, but from that of heresy. Their conversion to orthodoxy showed the power which the Latin clergy had obtained over their minds; and they

^x See the curious Hist. of the Royal nuns (Greg. Tur. x. 20), and the excommunication of Archbishop Sisibert of Toledo: "Ut in fine vitæ tantum communionem accipiat, excepto, si regia pietas antea eum absolventum crediderit."—A.D. 693. Planck, p. 194.

^y According to Eichhorn, the first manifest "Concilium mixtum" was in A.D. 615. From this emanated the constitutions of Chlotaire II. which recognised the temporal powers of the hierarchy.—i. p. 520.

would hasten to lay the first fruits of their gratitude, submission, and reverence, at the feet of the clergy. Nor were the affairs discussed at these great councils strictly defined. There was no distinct line between civil and religious matters. This distinction belongs to a later period of civilisation. The clergy were not unwilling to obtain the royal or the national assent to their spiritual decrees. The king naturally desired the intelligence, the love of order, the authority, the influence of the clergy, to ratify his civil edicts. The reciprocal rights of each party had been as yet too little contested to awaken that sensitive jealousy of interference which grew up out of centuries of mutual aggression.

But if in the great public assemblies the bishops had already taken this rank, each in his city held an authority partly recognised by law, partly resting on the general awe and reverence.² As in the East, the bishop had a general superintendence over the courts of law. He had, if not always the presidential, a seat in the judicial tribunal.³ He was, if not by statute, by universal recognition, what the defensor had been in the old municipal system, only with all the increased influence of his religious character. To him the injured party could appeal in default of justice. He was the patron, the advocate of the poor. He had power to punish subordinate judges for injustice in the absence of the king. In Spain the Bishops had a special charge to keep continual watch over the administration of

¹ So King Chlotaire ordained,— | increase in the power of the bishop,
Greg. Tur. vi. 31. | and on the freedom of the cities, com-

² On the residence of the bishops | pare Thierry.—*Récits Mérovingiens*
in the cities, its effect on the great | i. 266.

justice,^b and were summoned on all great occasions to instruct the judges to act with piety and justice.

Thus the clergy stood between the two hostile races in the new constitution of society—the reconcilers, the pacifiers, the harmonisers of the hostile elements. They were Latin in general in descent, in language, yet comprehending both races under their authority and influence; admitted to the councils of the Kings, and equal to the count or the noble in estimation; controlling one race by awe, looked up to by the other as their natural protectors; opposing brute force by moral and religious influences; supplying the impotency of the barbaric law to restrain oppression and iniquity (where every injury or crime had its commutative fine) by the dread of the religious interdict and the fears of hell; stooping unconsciously to the superstition of the times, but ruling more powerfully through that superstition. They were the guardians and protectors of the conquered,^c of the servile classes, whose condition was growing worse and worse, against the privileged free men; enduring, mitigating, when they could not control, the wild crimes of the different petty kings, who were constantly severing into fragments the great Frankish monarchy, and warring, intriguing, assassinating for each fragment. The Bishops during all that period, in Spain, in France, in Italy—making every allowance for the legendary and almost adoring tone in which their

^b "Ex decreto domini regis—simul cum sacerdotali concilio convenient ut discant quam piè et justè cum populis agere debeant."—Concil. Tolet. iii. 38.

^c "Sint prospectores episcopi quate judices cum populis agant, ut

ipsos præmonitos corrigant, aut insolentiam eorum principum auribus innotescant. Quod si correptos emendare nequiverint, et ab ecclesiâ et a communione suspendant."—Ibid.: compare Leg. Visigoth. ii. 1, 29, 30; Synod. Tolet. A.D. 633, can. 32.

histories have descended to us—appear as the sole representatives of law, order, and justice, as well as of Christian virtue and humanity. There is even a cessation of religious persecution, except against the Jews. After the extinction of Arianism, the human mind had sunk into such inactivity and barrenness that it did not even produce a new heresy. Except the peculiar opinions of Felix and Elipandus, and those of Adelbert and Clement in Gaul, down to the time when the monk Gotschalk started the question of predestination, the West slumbered in unreasoning orthodoxy.

A. The Barbaric codes, like the Roman, recognised slavery as an ordinary condition of mankind.^d Man was still a marketable commodity. The captive in war became a slave; and it was happy for mankind that he became so, otherwise the wars which swept over the whole world, civilised and uncivilised, must have been wars of massacre and extermination. The victory of Stilicho over Rhadagaisus threw 200,000 Goths or other Germans into the market, and lowered the price of a slave from twenty-five pieces of gold to one.^e The well-known story of the Anglo-Saxon youths who excited the compassion of Pope Gregory I. shows that in his time the public sale of slaves was still common in Rome. The redemption of captives—that is the repurchase of slaves in order to restore them to freedom—is esteemed an act of piety in the West as in the East. The first prohibition of this traffic, both by law and by public sentiment, was confined to the sale of Christians to pagans, Jews, and in

Rights of
persons
under Bar-
baric codes.

^d The church lived according to the Roman law: "*Legem Romanam quæ ecclesia vivit.*"—Eichhorn, i. 297. In the Ripuarian law the *wehrgeld* of the clergyman was at first according to his birth, "*Servus ut seivum;*" afterwards according to his ecclesiastical rank.—Ibid. ^e Orosius, vii. 37.

some cases to heretics. The Jews were the great slave-merchants of the age.^f But it was the religion rather than the personal freedom which was taken under the protection of the law. The capture and sale of men was part of the piratical system along all the shores of Europe, especially on the northern coasts. The sale of pagan prisoners of war was authorized by Clovis after the defeat of the Alemanni; by Charlemagne after that of the Saxons; by Henry the Fowler, as to that unhappy race which gave their name to the class—the Slaves.^g

The barbarian codes seem to acknowledge the legality of marriages between slaves, and their religious sanctity; that of the Lombards on the authority of the Scriptural sentence, “Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” All unlawful connexion with married or unmarried slaves is forbidden.^h The slave who detected his wife in adultery might, like the free man, kill the two criminals.ⁱ Still, however, they were slaves. The law interfered to prohibit marriages between the slaves of different masters. If the marriage took place without the consent of the master, the slave was punishable, by the Salic law, either by a mulct of three pence, or was to receive a hundred stripes. The later laws became more lenient, and divided the offspring between the two masters.

The barbarian codes were as severe as the Roman in prohibiting the debasing alliance of the free man with the slave. The Salic and Ripuarian law condemned the free man guilty of this degradation

^f Hist. of Jews, iii. p. 48.

^g Compare Biot, p. 185, De l'Abolition de l'Esclavage ancien en Occi-

dent. Paris, 1840.

^h Lex Salic. tit. xxviii.

ⁱ Lex Salic. xxviii. 5.

to slavery;^k where the union was between a free woman and a slave, that of the Lombards^m and that of the Burgundiansⁿ condemned both parties to death; but if her parents refused to put her to death, she became the slave of the crown. The Ripuarian law condemned the female delinquent to slavery; but the woman had the alternative of killing her base-born husband. She was offered a distaff and a sword. If she chose the distaff, she became a slave; if the sword, she struck it to the heart of her paramour, and emancipated herself from her degrading connexion.^o The Visigothic law condemned the female who had connexion with or wished to marry her own slave, or even a freed man, to death.^p For the same offence with the slave of another, both were punished with a hundred stripes. For the fourth offence the woman became the handmaid of the slave's master. The Saxon law still more sternly interdicted all marriages below the proper rank, whether of nobles, free men, or slaves, under pain of death. The laws of the Lombards and of the Alemanni were more mild. The latter allowed the female to separate from her slave husband on certain conditions, if she had not degraded herself by any servile occupation.^q

Under the barbarian as under the Roman law, the slave was protected chiefly as the property of his master. All injury or damage was done to the thing rather than the person, and was to be paid for by a mulct to the

^k Lex Sal. xxiv. v. 3: Lex Ripuar. lviii. 9.

^m cxxii. ⁿ Tit. xxxv. 2.

^o Lex Ripuar. lviii. 18.

^p Lex Visigoth. iii. ii. 2.

^q Adam. Brem., Hist. Eccles. i. 5. By

the Bavarian law, a slave committing fornication with a free woman was to be given up, to be put to death if they pleased, to the parents, and not to pay any mulct; "*quia talis præsumpti excitat inimicitias in populo.*"—ii. ix.

owner, not as a compensation to the sufferer.* By the Edict of Theodoric, he who killed the slave of another might be prosecuted for homicide, or sued by a civil process for the delivery of two slaves in place of the one killed.^s But slaves bore the penalty of their own offences, and even of those of their masters. If guilty of acts of violence, though under their masters' orders, they suffered death.^t The slave was not to be tortured, except to prove the guilt of his master, unless the informer would pay the master his value. If bought in order to suppress his evidence, he might be repurchased at the same price, and put to the torture.^u The right of life and death still subsisted in the master. According to some of the barbaric codes, here retrograding from the Roman, he had full power to make away with his own property. This usage, noticed by Tacitus as common to the German tribes, continued to the Capitularies of Charlemagne. That code adopts the Mosaic provisions.^x Under Lewis the Debonnaire and Lothair, the arbitrary murder of a slave was punished by excommunication or two years' penance.^y

* In the Burgundian law, the murder of a slave is only punished by a fine, according to his value.* The humaner Visigothic code distinctly prohibited the murder of a slave. The punishment was fine and infamy. Another law recognised the image of God in the slave, and therefore interdicted his mutilation.

• The Burgundian law shows that the artisans in the mingled Roman and barbarian society were chiefly slaves. "Quicunque vero servum suum auri-

ficem, argentarium, ferrarium, fabrum ærarium, sartorem vel sutorem, in publico adtributum artificium exercere permiserit," &c.—Tit. xxi.

^t Art. lxxvii.

^u Art. c. ci. By the Bavarian law, if a slave was unjustly put to the torture, the false accuser of the slave was to give another slave to the master; if the slave died under torture, two.†

* Exod. xxi. 20, 21.

^y Duchery, *Spicileg. Addit. ad Cap.* c. 49; Biot, p. 286.

* Tit. x.; *Leges Visigoth.* vi. v. 12; *Law of Egica*, vi. v. 12.

† Tit. viii. 18, 1, 2; compare Burgundian law, Tit. vii.

The runaway slave was the outcast of society. At first he was denied the privilege of asylum.^a It was a crime to conceal him; he might be seized anywhere; punished by his master according to his will; and according to some codes he might be slain in case of resistance. The influence of the Church appears in some singular and contradictory provisions.^b The Churches themselves were slaveholders.^c There were special provisions to protect their slaves. By the law of the Alemanni, whoever concealed an ecclesiastic's slave was condemned to a triple fine.^d In the Bavarian law, whoever incited the slave of a church or a monastery to flight, must pay a mulct of fifteen solidi, and restore the slave or replace him by another. The Church gradually claimed the right of asylum for fugitive slaves. The slave who had taken refuge at the altar was to be restored to his master only on his promise of remitting the punishment.^e

As under the Roman law, peculiar solemnity attached to the emancipation of the slave in the church and before the priest; and emancipation thus became an act of piety. So in some of the Teutonic codes, as in the Visigothic, emancipation before the parish priest was an ordinary act recognised by the law. It was a common form that it was done by the pious man for the remedy or the ransom of his soul.^f

^a Edict. Theodor. lxx.; Leg. Longobard. cclxxvii.

^b Lex Salica; Lex Ripuar. xiv.

^c "Non v' era anticamente Signor Secolare, Vescovo, Abbate, Capitolo di Canonici, e Monastero, che non avesse al suo servizio molti servi." Manumission was more rare among the clergy than among secular masters, because it

was an alienation of the property of the church.—Muratori, Ant. Italiane, Diss. xv. ^e Lex Alemann. 3.

^d Concil. Aurelian.; compare the Visigothic law, ix. 1, de fugitivis.

^e Leges Visigoth. v. vii.: compare note of Canciani, and the 15th Dissertation of Muratori. This began early both in East and West. "Servum

Easter was usually the appointed time for this public manumission in the churches; and no doubt the glad influences of that holy season awoke the disposition and the emulation, in many Christian minds, of conferring the blessing of freedom upon their slaves.

Gregory the Great seems to have been the first who enfranchised slaves on the pure and noble principle of the common equality of mankind.

But the great change in the condition of the servile order arose chiefly from other causes, besides the influence of Christianity. This benign influence operated no doubt in these indirect ways to a great extent, first on the mitigation, afterwards on the abolition, of domestic slavery; but it was perhaps the multiplication of slaves which to a certain extent slowly wrought its own remedy. The new relations of the different races consequent on the barbaric conquests, the habits of the Teutonic tribes settled within the Empire, the attachment of the rural or prædial slave to the soil, the change of the slave into the serf, which became universal in Europe, tended in different ways to the general though tardy emancipation. The serf was immoveable as the soil: he became as it were part of it, and so in some degree beyond the caprice or despotism of his master. Already under the Empire, the system of taxation had affixed the peasant to the soil: the owner paid according to the number of heads of slaves, as he might of cattle. Whether the cultivators were originally born on the estate ascribed to them, or settled upon it, they were equally irremoveable. No one could sell his estate, and

tuum manumittendum manu ducis in | prosecutio."—S. August. Serm. xxxi.
 ecclesiam. Fit silentium. Libellus | It was done pro remedio, or pro mer-
 tunc recitatur, aut fit desiderii tui | cede animæ suæ.

transfer the slaves to another property. The estates of the Church were no doubt, as they yet enjoyed no immunity of taxation, subject to the same laws. It may be generally said that the whole cultivation of the Roman Empire was conducted, if not by slaves, by those whose condition did not really differ from slavery. The emancipation began at a period in the Christian history, centuries later than that at which we are arrived at present.^f

The barbaric codes, as well as the Edict of Theodoric,^g retained the high Teutonic reverence for the sanctity of marriage. In the Burgundian law, adultery was punishable by death.^h In all cases it rendered the woman infamous. A widow guilty of incontinency could not marry again—at least could not receive dower. In the Visigothic code the adulteress and her paramour were given up to the injured husband, to be punished according to his will: he might put them to death.ⁱ The law of divorce under the Burgundian law was Roman, excepting that the woman who divorced her husband without cause, according to an old German usage as to infamous persons, was smothered in mud.^k Among the Visigoths, divorce was forbidden, excepting for adultery. Incest, by the Visigothic law, was extended to the sixth degree of relationship. Rape was punished by confisca-

^f Tit. xl.-xlviii.: compare the Justinian code "*De agricolis et censitis et colonis.*" Law of Constantius, i.—Law of Valentinian and Valens. "*Omnes omnino fugitivos adscriptitios, colonos vel inquilinos, sine ullo sexus, muneris conditionisque discrimine ad antiquos penates, ubi censiti atque educati natiq̄ue sunt, provinciis præsidentes redire compellant.*" On the

change of the slave into the serf in the Carolingian times compare Lahuërou, *Institutions Carlovingiennes*, page 204 *et seqq.* ^g See above.

^h Tit. lxviii. and lii.

ⁱ *Leges Visigoth.* iii. iv. 14 *et seq.*

^k "*Necetur in luto,*" xxxiv. 1. "*Ignavos et imbelles et corpore infames ceno ac palude, injectâ super crate, mergunt.*"—Tacit. Germ. c. xii.

tion of property, or failing that, by reduction to slavery.^m This code contained a severe statute against public prostitutes, rendering them liable to whipping. Incontinence in priests was corrected by penance; the woman was to be whipped. The former statute was in that stern tone towards unchastity which in the Goths Salvian contrasts with the impurity of Roman manners.ⁿ The later laws seem gradually to soften off into mulcts or compositions for these as for other crimes.

But among the yet un-Romanised Saxons, down to the days of St. Boniface, the maiden who has dishonoured her father's house, or the adulteress, is compelled to hang herself, is burned, and her paramour hung over the blazing pile;^o or she is scourged or cut to pieces with knives by all the women of the village till she is dead.

B. In the barbaric as in the Roman code, the law of property might seem enacted with the special view of securing to the Church wealth which could not but be constantly accumulating, and could never diminish. Every freeman might leave his property to the Church. No duke or count had a right to

^m Tit. iii. vi. Unnatural crimes were punished by castration. By the Bavarian law, whoever took away a nun to marry her committed adultery. "Scimus illum crimini obnoxium esse qui alienam sponsam rapit, quanto magis ille obnoxius est crimini qui Christi usurpavit sponsam."—xii. 1.

ⁿ iii. iv. 17. "Esse inter Gothos non licet scortatorem Gothum, soli inter eos præjudicio nationis ac nominis permittuntur impuri esse Romani."—Salvian. de Gub. Dei, vii. Lahuërou,

however, observes; "Voyez quelle énorme disproportion la loi met entre les obligations et les devoirs des deux époux! Le mari peut être infidèle autant de fois et à tel degré qu'il le voudra, sans que la femme ait le droit de s'en plaindre." The German woman was in fact, though in a less degree than the Roman, the property of her husband.—Lahuërou, Institutions Carlovingiennes, p. 38.

^o A.D. 743. Bonifac. Epist. ad Ethelbel. Reg. Mercie.

interfere. The heir who ventured to reclaim such dedicated property was liable to the judgement of God and to excommunication, recognised in more than one code.^p The freeman might retain to himself and so enjoy the usufruct during his own life, and leave his heirs beggars. The proofs of such donations were all to the advantage of the Church. The barbaric codes left the clergy to secure the inalienability of their property by their own laws. At first, and until the Bishop began to be merged in the temporal feudatory, it was comparatively safe in its own sanctity. In the division of the conquered lands by the barbarians, the Church estates remained sacred. The new converts could not show their sincerity better than by their prodigality to the Church. Clovis and his first successors, ignorant of the value of their new acquisitions, awarded large tracts of land with a word. St. Remigius received a great number of lands to be distributed among the destitute churches. Their successors complained of this thoughtless prodigality. Already they had discovered that the royal revenues had been transferred to the Church.^q The whole Teutonic law, which appointed certain compensations for certain crimes, would have suggested, had suggestion been necessary, the commutation system of the Church. God, like the free man or the King, might be propitiated by the wehrgeld; the penance of the Christian be compensated by a pecuniary mulct. Already Queen Fredegunde satisfies the conscience of two hesitating murderers whom she would employ to assassinate her brother-in-law, King Sigebert, by the

^p Lex Alemann. et Lex Burgund., in | mansit locus noster, et divitiæ nostræ
initio. | ad ecclesias sunt translatae."—Greg
^q "Eccc, aiebat Rex, pauper re- | Tur. vi. 46.

promise of large alms to the Church, in order to secure them from hell or purgatory.^r So rapidly and alarmingly was the Church in France becoming rich, that King Chilperic passed a law annulling all testaments in which the Church was constituted heir; but Gunthran, not long after, repealed the sacrilegious statute, and these murderous and adulterous and barbarous kings and nobles were again enabled to die in peace, confident in the remission of their sins by the sacrifice of some portion of their plunder (the larger the offering the more secure) on the altar of God.^s

But the barbarous times which bestowed so lavishly were by no means disposed superstitiously to respect the property of the Church. It was often but late in life that the access of devotion came on, while through all the former part, either by right of conquest, by terror, or by bribery, the barbarian had not scrupled to seize back consecrated land. Even kings were obliged to ratify and solemnise their own grants by synods or by national assemblies.^t The deepening of the imprecations uttered by these synods against robbers of the Church shows their necessity. These lands began to be guarded by all the terror of superstition; wild legends everywhere spread of the awful and miraculous

* *Gesta Francorum*. Planck, ii. 199.

• All the laws acknowledged the right of alienating some portion from the rightful heir, “*pro remedio animæ*,” or “*in remissionem peccatorum*.” There are legal formulæ in Marculf to this effect. Some codes, however, prohibited the absolute disinheritance of the right heir for the good of the church. Eichhorn, p. 359: *compare 363 et seqq.*

• In a synod at Valence, King Gunthran demanded the ratification of all the gifts which he, his wife, and daughters had bestowed on the church. All plunderers of this property “*anathemate perpetui judicii divini plectendi atque supplicii æterni obnoxii tenendi sunt*.” King Dagobert confirmed his legacies in a parliament, the legacies which he had bequeathed “*memoratorum quæ gesserit*.”—Planck, 203.

punishments which had fallen on such offenders.^u In a few centuries the deliverer of Europe from the Mahomedan yoke, Charles Martel, was plunged into hell, and revealed in his torments to the eyes of men, as a standing and awful witness to the inexpressible sin of sacrilege.

The property of the Church as yet enjoyed no immunity from taxation. Gradually special exemptions were granted. At length the manse of the church (a certain small farm or estate) was entirely relieved from the demands of the state. Even the claim to absolute freedom from contribution to the public expenses was of a much later period.^x

C. The Criminal law of the barbaric codes tended more and more to the commutation of crime or injury for a pecuniary mulct. High treason Criminal law of barbarians. alone, compassing the death of the King, corresponding with the enemies of the realm, or introducing them within its frontier, was generally a capital crime. Yet in the Visigothic code the capital punishment of treason could be commuted for putting out the eyes, shaving the hair, scourging, perpetual imprisonment, or exile, with confiscation and attainder, and in this case the criminal could not make over his property to the Church.^y Such donations were void. But of all crimes the King had power of pardon with the consent of the clergy and the great officers of his palace. The Bavarian law adds sedition in the camp to acts of treason, but even this might be forgiven by the royal mercy.^z

^u Gregory of Tours is full of such tales.

^x Planck, ii. ch. vii. King Chlotaire, in 540, demanded a third part of the revenue of the church as an extraordinary loan.—Greg. Tur. iv. 2.

^y Lex Visigoth. vi. 1, 2.

^z "Et ille homo qui hæc commisit benignum imputet regem aut ducem si ei vitam concesserit."—Lex Bavar. ii. iv. 3.

As to other crimes, except adultery and incest, it was Teutonic usage, not Christian humanity, which abrogated the punishment of death. In the Burgundian law homicide is still a capital crime; but gradually the life of every man below the King is assessed, according to his rank, at a certain value, and the wehrgeld may be received in atonement for his blood.^a Even the sacred persons of the clergy had their price, which rises in proportionate amount with their power and influence. By the Bavarian law, should any one kill a bishop lawfully chosen,^b a tunic of lead was to be fitted to the person of the bishop, and the commutation for his murder was as much gold as that tunic weighed: if the gold was not to be had, the same value in money, slaves, houses, or land; if the offender had none of these, he was sold into slavery. Nor was it life only which was thus valued; every wound and mutilation of each particular member of the body was carefully registered in the code, and estimated according as the man was noble, freeman, slave, or in holy orders. The slave alone was still liable to capital punishment for certain offences;^c the Visigothic code condemned him to be burned.^d Torture was not only, according to Roman usage, to be applied to slaves, but even to freemen in certain cases.^e

The privilege of asylum within the Church is recognised in most of the barbaric codes.^f It is asserted in the strongest terms, and in terms impregnated with true

^a Parricide alone, by the Visigothic law, was punished by the same death as that inflicted.

^b "Si quis episcopum quem constituit rex, vel populus elegit."—Lex Bavar. xi. 1.

^c Or scourging, for theft, by the

Burgundian law.—iv. 2.

^d Lex Visigoth. iii. iv. 14.

^e Lex Visigoth. vi. 1, 2, ii. iv. 4.

^f On the subject of asylum, compare the excellent dissertation of Paolo Sarpi, *De jure Asylorum*.—Opera, iv. p. 191.

Christian humanity, that there is no crime which may not be pardoned from the fear of God and reverence for the saints.⁵ As yet perhaps the awe of the Christian altar only arrested justice in its too hasty and vindictive march, and in these wild times gave at least a temporary respite for the innocent victim, to obtain liberty that he might plead his cause against the fierce populace or the exasperated ruler, for the man of doubtful guilt to obtain a fair trial, or for the real criminal to suffer only the legal punishment for his offence. As yet the priest could not shield the heinous criminal. By the Visigothic code he was compelled to surrender the homicide.^h With the ruder barbarians the sanctity of holy places came in aid of the sacerdotal authority; and in those savage times no doubt the notion that it was treason against God to force even the most flagrant criminal from his altar, protected many innocent lives, and retarded the precipitancy even of justice itself.^l The right was constantly infringed by violent kings or rulers, but rarely without strong remonstrance from the clergy; and terrible legends were spread abroad of the awful punishments which befel the violaters of the sanctuary.^k

Already, in the earliest codes, appears the abrogation of the ordinary tribunals of justice by appeal to arms, and to the judgement of God: even the Burgundian law admits the trial by battle.^m

⁵ "Nulla sit culpa tam gravis, ut non remittatur, propter timorem Dei et reverentiam sanctorum."—*Lex. Bavar.* vii. 3. It was an axiom of the Roman law, "*Templorum cautela non nocentibus sed læsis datur a lege.*"—*Justin. Novell.* xvii. 7.

^h *Lex Visigoth.* vi. v. 16.

^l See *Greg. Tur.* vii. 19; iv. 18.

^k Restrictions were placed on this undefined right. In a capitular of 779—"Homicidæ et cæteri rei, qui mori debent legibus, si ad ecclesiam confugerint, non excusentur, neque eundem ibidem victus detur."

^m *Tit.* xlv.

The ordea. is a superstition of all nations and of all ages. God is summoned to bear miraculous witness in favour of the innocent, to condemn the guilty.^a The Ripuarian law admits the trial by fire,^o the Visigothic by red-hot iron.^p The Church, at a later period, took the ordeal under its especial sanction. There was a solemn ritual for the ceremony.^q It took place in the church. The scalding water, the red-hot iron, or the ploughshare were placed in the porch of the church and sprinkled with holy water. All the most awful mysteries of religion were celebrated to give greater terror and solemnity to the rite. Invention was taxed to discover new forms of appeal to the Deity; swearing on the Gospels, on the altar, on the reliques, on the host; plunging into a pool of cold water, he who swam was guilty, he who sunk innocent; they were usually held by a cord. There were ordeals by hot water, by hot iron, by walking over live coals or burning ploughshares.^r This seems to have been the more august

^a Compare Calmet and Grotius on Numbers v. 31, for the instances from classical antiquity. Pliny and Solinus mention two rivers, which either by scalding or blinding, detected perjury. —H. N. xxxi. 2, cap. xi.

ἦμεν δ' ἔτοιμοι καὶ μύδρους αἶρειν χερσίν,
καὶ πῦρ διέρπειν, καὶ θεοὺς ὀρκωμοτεῖν,
τὸ μῆτε δρᾶσαι, μῆτε τῷ ξυνειδέναι
τὸ πρᾶγμα βουλεύσαντι μῆτ' εἰργασμένῳ.
Sophocl. Antig. 264.

"Et medium freti pietate per ignem
Cultores multa premimus vestigia prunâ."
Virg. Æneid. xi. 787.

Pliny, xi. c. 2.

^o Tit. xxx.

^p Lex Visigoth. vi. 1, 3. See the very curious note of Canciani, and quotation from the Constitutions of Bæça on this passage.

^q See the very remarkable ritual in

Canciani, ii. 453.

^r The ordeal was condemned in later days by many popes as tempting God: by Alexander II., Stephen X., Honorius III. Muratori thought that it was abolished in the twelfth century. Canciani quotes later instances. That of Savonarola, a real ordeal, might suffice. Even Canciani seems to look back upon it with some lingering respect: "Ego reor Deo Opt. Max. plus placuisse majorum nostrorum simplicitatem et fidem quam recentiorum sapientum acutissimam philosophiam." —Vol. ii. p. 293. Greg. Turon. de Martyr. 69, 70. All the ritualists, Martene, Mabillon, Ducange, under the different words, Muratori in two dissertations, one on the ordeal, one on

ceremony for queens and empresses—undergone by one of Charlemagne's wives, our own Queen Emma, the Empress Cunegunda. The ordeal went down to a more homely test, the being able to swallow consecrated bread and cheese.

The new crimes which the Christianity of these ages had introduced into the penal code of the Empire found their place in the barbaric codes. At first, indeed, they were left to the cognisance of the clergy, and to be visited by ecclesiastical penalties. The Arianism of the primitive Teutonic converts compelled the toleration of the laws, and retained a kind of dread of touching on such subjects in the earlier codes; but in proportion as the ecclesiastics became co-legislators, heresies became civil crimes, and liable to civil punishments.^s The statutes of the orthodox Visigothic kings, so terrible against the Jews, were not more merciful to heretics. The Franks were from the first the army of orthodoxy; heretics were traitors to the state, as well as rebels against the Church, confederates of hostile Visigoths, or Burgundians, or Lombards.

Witchcraft was a crime condemned by the Visigothic law.^t Its overt acts were causing storms, invocation of demons, offering nightly sacrifices to devils. The punishment was 200 stripes, and shaving the head. Consulting soothsayers concerning the death of the King was punished in a freeman by stripes and confiscation of property, and perpetual servitude: wizards guilty of poisoning suffered death.

III. But external to and independent of the Imperial

fuel, furnish ample citations. Almost all, however, are later than these primitive barbaric laws.

^s Laws of Recared, xii. 2, 1.

^t *Lex Visigoth.* vi. 2, 3. There was a singular provision against judges consulting diviners in order to detect witches.

Law and the constitutions of the new western kingdoms
Law of the Church. was growing up the jurisprudence of the Church, commensurate with the Roman world, or rather with Christendom. Every inhabitant of the Christian empire, or of a Christian kingdom, was subject to this second jurisdiction, which even by the sentence of outlawry which it pronounced against heretics, assumed a certain dominion over those who vainly endeavoured to emancipate themselves from its yoke. The Church as little admitted the right of sects to separate existence, as the empire would endure the establishment of independent kingdoms or republics within its actual pale. Of this peculiar jurisprudence of the Church, the clergy were at once the legislature and the executive. This double power tended more and more to concentration. In the State all power resided in the Emperor alone; the unity of the empire under a monarch inevitably tended to that of the Church under one visible head. As the clergy more and more withdrew itself into a privileged order, so the bishops withdrew from the clergy, the Metropolitans rose above the bishops, and the Bishop of Rome aspired to supreme and sole spiritual empire. Had Rome remained the capital of the whole world, the despotism, however it might have suffered a perpetual collision with the imperial power, ruling in the Eternal City, would probably have become, as far as ecclesiastical dignity, an acknowledged autocracy. A people habituated for centuries to arbitrary authority in civil affairs would be less likely to question it in religion. The original independence of the Christian character which induced the first converts in the strength of their faith to secede from the manners and usages as well as the religious rites of the world, to form self-governed republics, as it were, within the social system

—this noble liberty had died away as Christianity became a hereditary, an established, an universal religion. Obedience to authority was inveterate in the Roman mind; reverence for law had sunk into obedience to despotic power; arbitrary rule seemed the natural condition of mankind. This unrepining, uncomplaining servility could not be goaded by intolerable taxation to resistance. Nothing less than religious difference could stir the mind into oppugnancy, and this difference was chiefly concentrated in the clergy: when a heretic was in power the orthodox, when the orthodox the heretic, alone asserted liberty of action or of thought. In all other respects the law of the Church, as enacted by the clergy, was received with implicit submission. In the provinces, as the Presidents, or Prefects, or Counts, in their regular gradation of dignity, ruled with despotic sway, yet were but the representatives of the remote and supreme central power, so the Bishops, Metropolitans, Patriarchs rose above each other, and culminated, as it were, to some distant point of unity. The Patriarchates had been fixed in the greatest cities of Europe, Asia, and Africa. These were the seats likewise of the highest provincial governments; the other chief provincial cities were usually the seats of local administration, and of the metropolitan sees; and so the stream of public business, civil and ecclesiastical, was perpetually flowing to the same centre. It was at once the place at which all that remained, the shadow, as it were, of the old popular assemblies, as well as the ecclesiastical synods, were convened; appeals came thither from all quarters, imperial mandates were issued to the province or theme. On this principle Constantinople continued still to rise in influence; Alexandria for above a century resisted, but resisted in vain, the

advancement of the upstart unapostolic See. The new Rome asserted her Roman dignity against the East, while on every favourable opportunity she raised up claims to independence, to equality, even to superiority, against the elder Rome, now a provincial city of the Justinian empire.

Rome was the sole Patriarchate of the West, the head and centre of Latin Christianity. Rome stood alone, almost without rival or reclamation. Ravenna, as the seat of empire under the exarchs, might aspire to independence, to equality; her pretensions were soon put down by her own impotence and by common opinion. Wherever the Latin language was spoken there was no rival to the supremacy of Rome. The African churches, distracted by the Donatists, oppressed and persecuted by the Arian Vandals, revived but as the churches of a province of the Eastern empire. Carthage was still one of the great cities of the world, her bishop the acknowledged head of the churches in Africa. But the African Church, though obedient to the East, after Justinian's conquest, and just emerging into ascendancy over the Arians, had neither ambition nor strength to assert independence. Of the Teutonic kingdoms founded within the ancient realm of Rome, three had been destroyed during the sixth century, those of the Ostrogoths in Italy, of the Vandals in Africa, of the Burgundians in France. Of the four which survived, the Lombard was still Arian, the Anglo-Saxon was heathen and not yet consolidated into one kingdom; those of the Visigoths in Spain and of the Franks in Gaul, if still of uncertain boundaries, and frequently subdivided in different proportions, accepted the supremacy of Rome as part of the Catholicism to which one had returned after a long apostacy, with all the blind and ardent zeal of a new

proselyte; the other, whose war-cry of conquest had been the Catholic faith, would bow down in awe-struck adoration before the head of that faith. The Latin clergy, who had made common cause with the Franks, would inculcate this awe as the most powerful auxiliary to their own dominion.

In the West the state of ecclesiastical affairs tended constantly to elevate the actual power of the single Patriarchate. The election of the bishops in the Roman provinces and in the new Teutonic kingdoms was in the clergy and the people. Strife constantly arose; the worsted party looked abroad for aid; if they found it not with the Metropolitan, they sought still further; and as the provincial of old appealed to Rome against the tyranny of the civil governor, so the clergy against the bishop, the bishop against the Metropolitan. They fled in the last resort to what might seem to be an impartial, at least might be a favourable tribunal.

But throughout these kingdoms there was another strong bond to Rome—the common interest of the Latin part of the community against the foreign and Teutonic. The old Roman aristocracy of the provinces, except in some municipal towns, perished or were degraded from their station by the new military aristocracy of the conquerors. But the clergy could not but continue, it has been seen that they did continue, for a considerable period to be Roman. They were thus a kind of peaceful force, bound together by common descent, and still looking to Rome as their parent. Nothing is known of the Arian clergy who accompanied the Goths, the Vandals, or the Lombards, and kept up the tradition of the heterodox faith, whether they too were chiefly Roman, or had begun to be lar-

The Clergy
Latin.

barian.^u The rare collisions which are recorded, the general toleration, except among the Vandals in Africa, might lead to the conclusion that they were the Teutonic clergy of a Teutonic people, each contentedly worshipping apart from each other, as under its separate law, so under its separate religion, until the superior intelligence, the more ardent activity of the orthodox Latins, brought over first the kings and nobles, as Recared in Spain and the later Lombard kings, afterwards the people, to the unity of the Church. The toleration of the Arians, and even writers like Orosius admit that in Gaul the Goths and Burgundians treated the orthodox Christians as brothers, was, after all, but indifference, or ignorance that there was another form of Christianity besides that which they had been taught.^x It was more often that the Catholics provoked than suffered persecution wantonly inflicted.^y That submission which the Roman paid to the clergy out of his innate and inveterate deference for law, if not from servility, arose in the Teuton partly from his inherent awe of the sacerdotal character, partly from his conscious inferiority in intellectual acquire-

^u In the *Collatio Episcoporum*, where Avitus of Vienne challenged the Arian clergy to bring their conflicting doctrines to the issue of a public disputation, the head of the Arian clergy is named Boniface. The Arians (it is a Catholic account) were struck dumb, or replied only in unmeaning clamours; one sentence alone betrays the ground they took; they stood on the Scripture alone; the Catholics were *præstigiatores*. Did they mean workers of false miracles? "*Sufficere sibi se habere scripturam, quæ sit fortior omnibus præstigiis.*" The conference was in the year 419.—D'Achery, "ii. p. 304.

^x Orosius, vii. 33. There was a kind of persecution of some bishops in Aquitaine. — Sidon. Apoll. vii. 6. Modaharius the Goth, a citizen, not a clergyman, is named by Sidonius—the name sounds like Latinised Teutonism. Of Euric, Sidonius says, "*Pectori suo catholici mentio nominis acet.*" At this time the bishoprics of Bordeaux and eight others were vacant, no clergy ordained, the churches in ruins, herds pasturing on the grass-grown altars.

^y See on the confederacy of the orthodox bishops in Burgundy with the Franks, ch. ii.

ments.^z No doubt already the Latin of the ordinary Church services had become, and naturally became more and more, a sacred language.^a The Gothic version of the Scriptures was probably confined to that branch of the nation for which it had been made by Ulphilas: it could not have been disseminated widely. The Latin clergy, even if they had the will, could not, during the formation of the various dialects or languages which grew up in Europe, have translated the sacred books or the services of the Church into the ever-shifting and blending dialects. Till languages grew up, recognised as their own by nations, there could be no claim to a vernacular Bible or a vernacular Liturgy. Latin would establish a strong prescription, a prescription, in fact, of centuries; and that, as on the one hand it would tend to keep the clerical office chiefly in the hands of those of Latin descent, would likewise preserve the unity of which the centre was Rome.^b

Rome throughout this period is still standing in more lonely pre-eminence: from various circumstances, perhaps from the continually shifting boundaries of the kingdoms, the Metropolitan power, especially in Gaul,

^z Compare Paulus Diaconus on the conversion of the Lombards, iv. 44.

^a I cannot refrain from quoting the observations of a modern writer:—"Christianity offered itself, and was accepted by the German tribes, as a law and as a discipline, as an ineffable, incomprehensible mystery. Its fruits were, righteousness by works (*Werkheiligkeit*), and belief in the dead word. But in a barbarous people it is an immense advance, an unappreciable benefit. Ritual observance is a taming, humiliating process; it is submission

to law; it is the acknowledgment of spiritual inferiority; it implies self-subjection, self-conquest, self-sacrifice. It is not religion in its highest sense, but it is the preparation for it."—Ritter, *Geschich.*, *Christ. Philos.* i. p. 40.

^b Planck supposes that for half a century after the conversion of the Franks the bishops were, without exception, Latin; about 566 appears a Meroveus, Bishop of Poitiers.—*Greg. Tur.* ix. 40; Planck, ii. 96. In the eighth century the clergy were chiefly from the servile class.—p. 159.

only centuries later, if ever, assumed its full weight. On the other hand, that of the bishops over the inferior clergy became throughout the western kingdoms more arbitrary and absolute. The bishop stands alone, the companion and counsellor of kings and nobles, the judge, the ruler; the College of Presbyters, the advisers, the co-ordinate power with the bishop, has entirely disappeared. It is rarely at this period that we discern in history the name of any one below the episcopal rank. Even in the legends of this age we scarcely find a saint who is not a bishop, or at least, and that as yet but rarely, an abbot.^c The monasteries at first claimed no exemption from the episcopal autocracy: they aspired not yet to be independent, self-governed republics. The primitive monks, laymen in every respect, would have shrunk from the awful assertion of superiority to the common law of subjection. The earlier councils prohibited the foundation of a monastery, even of a solitary cell, without the permission of the bishop. Gradually monks were ordained, that the communities might no longer depend for the services of religion on the parochial clergy; but this infringement on the profound humility of the monk was beheld with jealousy by the more rigid. S. Benedict admits it with reserve and caution. It was not till splendid monasteries were founded by religiously prodigal nobles, kings, and even prelates, and endowed with ample territories and revenues, that they were withdrawn from the universal subordination, received special privileges of exemption, became free communities under the protection of the King, or of the Pope.^d The lower clergy were in fact in great numbers

^c Planck, ii. 368.

^d Compare M. Guizot, *Civilisation Moderne*, Leçon xv., who has traced

the change, and cites the authorities with his usual sagacity and judgment.

ordained slaves, slaves which the Church did not choose at hazard from the general servile class, but from her own serfs, and who were thus trained to habits of homage and submission. The first Franks or Goths who entered into holy orders would hardly be tempted by a less prize, or stoop to a lower dignity, than that of a bishop, except as far as it might be necessary to pass rapidly through the lower orders. The clergy were so entirely under the power of the bishop that a Spanish council thinks it necessary and seemly to secure them from arbitrary blows and stripes.^e

The ecclesiastical jurisprudence, therefore, was entirely, as well as the administration of the law in its more solemn form, in the bishops. They alone attended the synods or councils, they alone executed the decrees. Their mandate or their sanction was necessary for every important act of religion.

The whole penitential system was under their control and rested on their authority. Private confession might be received, absolution for private offences be granted by the priest: public or notorious crimes could be remitted by the bishop alone.

This ecclesiastical jurisprudence had its specific laws as ordinances for the government of the clergy; its more general statutes, which embraced all ^{Penitential system.} mankind. Every man, barbarian or Roman, under whichever civil law he lived, freeman or slave, was amenable to this code, which had the penitential system for its secondary punishment; excommunication, which in general belief, if the excommunicated died unrecon

^e "Ne passim unusquisque episcopus honorabilia membra sua presbyteros sive Levitas, prout voluerit et complacuerit, verberibus subiciat et dolori."—Syn. Bracar. iv. A.D. 675, can. 7.

ciled, was tantamount to eternal perdition, for its capital punishment. The excommunication as yet was strictly personal: it had not grown into the interdict which smote a nation or a country.

Of this twofold law, that over the clergy and that over the laity, the administration of the first was absolutely in the bishops—that of the second only more remotely, and in the last resort. The usual penalties were different. The sacred person of the priest had peculiar privations and penalties, in some respects more severe, in others more indulgent, chastisements. The attempt to reconcile the greater heinousness of the offence in the sinful priest with the respect for his order, led at times to startling injustice and contradiction.^f

The delinquent clerk might be deprived for a time of his power of administering sacred things; he might be thrown back, an unworthy and a despised outcast, into the common herd of men, or rather lower than the common herd (for the ineffaceable ordination held him still in its trammels, in its responsibility, though he had forfeited its distinctions and its privileges), but even then the mercy of the Church provided courses of penance more or less long and austere, by which, in most cases, he might retrieve the past, and rise, to some at least, of his lost prerogatives. The monasteries, in later times, became a kind of penal settlements, where under strict provisions the exile might expiate his offences, work out the redemption of his guilt, if not permitted to return to the world, at least die in peace;

^f Throughout the Penitentials, the penalties are heavier on the clergy than the laity. For murder, a clerk did penance for ten years, three on bread and water; a layman, three, one on bread and water. The clergy, too, were punished according to their rank; where one in inferior orders has six, a deacon has seven, a priest ten, a bishop twelve years' penance.—Morinus.

at all events his degradation was concealed from a babbling and censorious world.

The law administered by the clergy, throughout the Christian polity, comprehended every moral or religious act; and what act of man could be beyond that wide and undefined boundary? Whatever the Church, whatever the individual clergyman, declared to be sin (the appeal even to the bishop was difficult and remote), was sin. The timid conscience would rarely dare to judge for itself: the judge therefore was at once the legislator, the expounder of the law, the executioner of the law.^a

This law had its capital punishment—excommunication, which absolutely deprived of spiritual life. Excommunication, in its more solemn form, was rarely pronounced by lower than bishops.^b It was the weapon with which rival bishops encountered each other, which they reserved for enemies of high rank. It was the sentence of Councils only which cut off whole sects from the communion of the Church.

But excommunication in a milder form—the temporary or the enduring deprivation of those means of grace without which salvation was hopeless, the refusal of absolution, the key which alone opened the gates of heaven—was in the power of every priest: on his judgment, on his decree, hung eternal life, eternal death.

^a “Itaque postquam criminum omnium occultorum pœna quibuslibet presbyteris concessa est, libelli Pœnitentiales præter canones conditi sunt in quibus hæc omnia distincte in simpliciorum presbyteriorum gratiam et necessariam instructionem enarrabantur, ut pœnitentiarum imponendarum officio defungi possent.” — Morinus. This

work of Morinus de Pœnitentiâ affords ample and accurate knowledge on the history of the Penitential law, and of the different penitentials which prevailed in the Western churches.

^b Public penance was at first only adjudged by the bishops.—Sirmond. de Pœnit. Public.; Opera, vol. iv.

But though this, like all despotic irresponsible power, or power against which the mass of mankind had no refuge, was liable to abuse, was often no doubt abused, it was still constantly counteracted by the Penitentials which as wisely (lest men should break the yoke in utter despair) as mercifully, were provided by the religious code of Christianity. The Penitentials were part of the Christian law; how early part of the written law, is not quite clear; nor were they uniform, or in fact established by any universal or central authority—that of Pope or Council;¹ but they were not the less an admitted customary or common law, a perpetual silent control on the arbitrary power of the individual priest, a guarantee as it were to the penitent, that if he faithfully submitted to the appointed discipline, he could not be denied the inappreciable absolution. The Penitentials thus, by regulating the sacerdotal power, confirmed it; that which might have seemed a hard capricious exaction became a privilege; the mercies of the law were indissolubly bound up with its terrors. However severe, monastic; unchristian, as enjoining self-torture; degrading to human nature, as substituting ceremonial observance for the spirit of religion; debasing instead of wisely humiliating; and resting in outward forms which might be counted and calculated (so many hours of fasting, so many blows of the scourge, so many prayers, so many pious ejaculations, for each offence) yet as enforcing, it might be, a rude and harsh discipline, it was still a moral and religious discipline. It may have been a low, timid, dependent virtue to which it compelled the believer, yet still virtue. It was a perpetual proclama-

The three oldest were the Penitentials of Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, of Bede, and the Roman. That of Rabanus Maurus obtained in Germany.—Mormus.

tion of the holiness and mercy of the Gospel. It was a constant preaching, on one hand, it might be of an unenlightened, superstitious Christianity, but still of Christianity. So too, on the other hand, it was a recognition of a divine law, submission to a religion which might not be defied, which would not be eluded—a religion which would not deny its hopes to the worst, but would have at least resolutions, promises of amendment—the best security which it could obtain—from the unreasoning and fallible nature of man. It aspired at least to effect that which no human law could do, which baffled alike imperial and barbaric legislation, to impose constraint on the unchristian passions and dispositions. When sacerdotal religion was, if not necessary, salutary at least to mankind, it was the great instrument by which the priesthood ruled the mind of man. If it increased the wealth of the clergy, it was wealth much of which lawless possessors, spoilers, robbers, had been forced to regorge. If it invested them with an authority as dangerous to themselves as to the world, that authority was better than moral anarchy. However administered, it was still law, and Christian law, grounded on the eternal principles of justice, humanity, and truth.^k

^k It will hereafter appear in our History how the penitential system degenerated into commutations for penance by alms (alms being only part of the penance, compensated for prayer, fasting, and other religious observances); alms regulated indeed by the rank and wealth of the transgressor, but with full expiatory value; commutations became indulgences; indulgences, first the remission of certain penitential acts, then general remission of sins for definite periods, at length for periods almost approximating to eternity: and these for the easiest of religious duties, visits to a certain church, above all ample donations.

CHAPTER VI.

Western Monasticism.

MONASTICISM ascended the papal throne in the person of Gregory the Great. As our history approaches this marked period in the annals of Latin Christianity, it is necessary to describe the rise and progress of those institutions, which at once tended so powerfully to propagate, to maintain, and to give its peculiar character to the Christianity of Western Christendom.

Western monasticism was very different from that of the East. It was practical more than speculative; it looked more to the performance of rigid duty, the observance of an austere ritual, the alternation of severe toil with the recitation of certain stated offices or the reading appointed portions of sacred books, than to dreamy indolence and meditative silence, only broken by the discussion of controverted points of theology. Labour was part of the rule of all the eastern monks; it was urged by the wiser advocates of the monastic state, Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, even Jerome: it was enforced in the law of the monastic life brought by Cassianus from the East;^a and it is

^a "A labouring monk is troubled by one devil, an idle one by a host of devils."—Cassian. x. 23. Augustine wrote a book, de Opere Monachorum. M. Villemain has this striking observation: "De cette rude école du désert il sortait des grands hommes et des fous."—Mélanges, Eloquence Chrétienne, p. 356. The East had few great men, many madmen; the West, madmen enough, but still very many great men.

singular that it was first repudiated by Martin of Tours and his disciples;^b yet the eastern element predominated over the rule almost throughout Greek Christianity. The Greek monks have done little or nothing to advance the cultivation of barren lands, for the arts, for knowledge, or for civilisation. But the hermits in the West were in general content with the wild recesses of nature, and with a rigid but secret discipline. They had neither the ingenious nor the ostentatious self-tortures which were common in the East. They had hardly one Stylites, men who stood for decades of years^c on a lofty pillar, a pillar elevated in height as the saint drew nearer to heaven and to perfection^d—as yet no rambling and vagabond monks, astonishing mankind by the public display of their miserable self-inflicted sufferings. Nor did Cœnobites disturb the peace of the western cities by crowding with arms in their hands, ready with unscrupulous and sanguinary fanaticism for slaughter, or worse than slaughter, in the maintenance of some favourite doctrine, or some favourite prelate. Under their founder in Northern France, Martin of Tours, they might lend their tumultuous aid in the demolition of some heathen shrine or temple; but their habits were usually those of profound peace; they aspired not yet to rule the world which they had forsworn: it was not till much later that their abbots, now endowed with enormous wealth poured upon them by blind admiration of their holiness, assumed political

^b Paulin. de Vit. Martini, l. ii. Sulpic. Severus, c. 7.

^c Fifty-six, according to Evagrius, t. iii. i. 13; Theodoret. His. Relig., p. 882. For Wulfilas the one Stylites of the West at Treves, see Fleury, xxiv.

22.

^d "The Gallic bishops ordered a pillar to be destroyed on which an ambitious Western aspired to rival the East."—Greg. Tur. i. 17. Compare Schroeck, viii. p. 231.

existence. The western monks partook of that comparative disinclination to the more subtle religious controversy which distinguished Roman from Greek and Oriental Christendom. Excepting the school of semi-Pelagianism, propagated by the Oriental Cassianus among the monasteries in the neighbourhood of Marseilles (still to a certain extent a Greek city, and with the Greek language spoken around it), the monasteries were the seats of submissive, uninquiring orthodoxy. They were not as yet the asylums of letters. Both the ancient Latin prose and ancient Latin poetry were too repulsively and dangerously heathen to be admitted into the narrow cell or the mountain cloister. This perilous tendency to intellectual indulgence which followed Jerome into his cave in Palestine, and could only be allayed by the scourge and unintermitting fast, as yet did not penetrate into the solitudes of the western recluses. But, if the reason was suppressed with such unmitigated proscription, the imagination, while it shrunk from those metaphysic abstractions which are so congenial to eastern mysticism, had full scope in the ordinary occurrences of life, which it transmuted into perpetual miracle. The mind was centered on itself; its sole occupation was the watching the emotions, the pulsations of the religious life; it impersonated its impulses, it attributed to external or to foreign but in-dwelling powers the whole strife within. Everything fostered, even the daily labour, which might have checked, carried on in solitude and in silence, encouraged the vague and desultory dreaminess of the fancy. Men plunged into the desert alone, or united themselves with others (for there is no contagion so irresistible as that of religious emotion) under a deep conviction that there was a fierce contest taking place for the soul of

each individual, not between moral influences and unseen and spiritual agencies, but between beings palpable, material, or at least having at their command material agents, and constantly controlling the course of nature. All the monks' scanty reading was of the miracles of our Lord or his Apostles, or still more the legends of saints. Their singing was of the same subjects. Their fasts were to expel demoniacal possessions, their festivals to celebrate the actual presence of the tutelar saint. And directly the soul escaped, as it could not but escape, from the narrow internal world, it carried into the world without, not merely that awful reverence which sees God in everything, but a wondering ignorance of nature and of man, which made miracle the ordinary rather than the exceptional state of things. The scenes among which they settled were usually such as would promote this tendency—strange, desolate, gloomy, fearful, the interminable sea or desert, the mountain immeasurable by the eye, the unfathomed glen; in Italy volcanic regions, either cleft or distorted by ancient eruptions, and still liable to earthquake and disorder. Their solitudes ceased to be solitary; they were peopled with sounds, with apparitions unaccountable and therefore supernatural. Whenever a few met together, they met upon the principle of encouraging each other, of vying with each other, of measuring the depth of their faith by their unhesitating belief. The state of mind was contagious; those around them were mostly peasants, serfs, who admired their austerities, revered their holiness; and whose credulity, even if it outran their own, the monks would not disabuse, lest they should disturb instead of deepen their religious impressions. When the monks went still further forth into the world, the fame of their recluse sanctity, of

their miracle-working holiness preceded them. Men were prepared for wonders, and he who is prepared for wonders will usually see them. Emulation, zeal for the glory of their founder, the awe, often the salutary awe, which controlled multitudes, the mind unbalanced by brooding upon itself, and the frame distempered by the wildest ascetic usages, the self-walled, self-barred, the sunless dreary dungeons, which they made themselves in the midst of populous cities, wrought the same effects on the monks in Rome, or Milan or Tours. Thus religion, chiefly through monasticism, conspired with barbarism to throw back mankind into a new childhood, a second imaginative youth. The mythic period of Christianity had begun and continued for centuries: full of the materials of poetry, producing a vast mass of what was truly poetic, but wanting form and order, destined to await the creation of new languages before it should culminate in great Christian poems, commencing with the Divine Comedy and closing with the Paradise Lost.

Monasticism, as we have seen, was introduced into the West by the authority and by the writings of the great Athanasius. In the time of Jerome it had found its proselytes among the patricians and high-born matrons and virgins of Rome. Many monasteries in that city excited the admiration of Augustine;^e and that of Nola, celebrated by S. Paullinus, did not stand alone in Southern Italy.^f Milan^g vied with Rome in the antiquity, in the severe sanctity of her monastery, which rose in one of the suburbs under

^e De Morib. Eccl. c. 33.

^f Ambros. Epist. lxiii. S. August. Confess. iv. 6.

^g "Constructa statuit requiescere cella

Heic ubi gaudentem nemoris vel palmitis
umbris
Italiam pingit pulcherrima Mediolanum."
Paul. in vit. S. Mart.

The Western monks already loved the beauties of nature.

the fostering care of S. Ambrose; and Ambrose acknowledged that he had but followed the holy example of Eusebius of Vercelli. Monasticism had now spread throughout the West. In the recesses of the Apennines; in the secluded islands along the coast of Italy; in Gaul, where it had been disseminated by the zeal of Martin of Tours; in Ireland; in the parts of Britain yet unwasted by the heathen Saxons; in Spain; in Africa, these young republics rose in all quarters, and secluded themselves from the ordinary duties, occupations, pursuits, and as they fondly thought, the passions and the sins of men. In Gaul the earliest monasteries were those of Ligugé, near Toulouse, and of Tours, both founded by S. Martin, of the Isle Barbe, in the Saone above Lyons, Toulouse, in the Islands of the Hieres and of Lerins. Cæsarius, the Bishop of Arles, whom his age considered to unite in an unparalleled degree the virtues of the ecclesiastic and the monk, and Casianus, who, originally an Oriental, settled at Marseilles, and endeavoured to realise in his monastery of St. Victor in that city the severity of his institutes, maintained and extended the dominion of monasticism in that province. The settlements of Columban will appear as the great initiatory measure which prepared and accomplished the conversion of Germany.

But even now no kingdom of the West is inaccessible to the rapid migrations, or sudden apparitions of these religious colonies.

The origin of Spanish monasticism is obscure. It is recognised by the decrees of various councils, those of Tarragona, of Lerida, of Barcelona, of Saragossa. It received a strong impulse from Donatus, an African, who landed with seventy monks from that country.

In Spain.

In Africa, monasticism, under St. Augustine, assumed a peculiar form, intermediate between the ordinary sacerdotal institutions and the monastery. The clergy were to live in common under a rule, in some respects rigidly monastic, yet to discharge all the ordinary duties of the priesthood. They were the first regular canons; but the Augustinian Order formed, as it was designed, on this ancient and venerable model, is of much later date, the twelfth century.^h

In Britain, monasticism had arrived before the Saxon invasion. It fled with Christianity to the fastnesses of Wales; the monks of Banchor, long established on the border, encountered the Saxon monks, who accompanied Augustine into the island. Ireland and the Western Isles were already studded with these religious retreats; Iona had its convent, and these institutions, which were hereafter to send forth S. Columban to convert and monasticise the German forests, were already at least in their early and initiatory state.

But the extension and organisation of monasticism in the West owes its principal strength and uniformity to Benedict of Nursia.ⁱ The life of Benedict, from infancy to death, is the most perfect illustration of the motives which then worked upon the mind of man. In him meet together and combine all those influences which almost divided mankind into recluses or cœnobites, and those who pursued an active life; as well as all the effects, in his case the best effects, produced by this phasis of human thought and feeling. Benedict, it was said, was born at that time, like a sun

^h Compare Thomassin, *La Discipline de l'Eglise*, i. 31.

ⁱ Baronius sub ann., but chiefly Mabillon, *Hist. Ord. Benedict.*

to dispel the Cimmerian darkness which brooded over Christendom, and to revive the expiring spirit of monasticism. The whole world was desolated by the inroads of the northern conquerors; the thrones of the new western kingdoms were filled by barbarian heretics; the East was distracted with controversy. War had not respected the monastic institutions; and those were fortunate who were shrouded in the mountain glens of the Apennines, or lay hid in some remote and sea-girt island. His age acknowledged Benedict as the perfect type of the highest religion, and Benedict impersonated his age.

In the time of Benedict no man could have made a profound impression or exercised an enduring influence upon the mind of man, without that enthusiasm in himself which would environ him with wonder, or without exciting that enthusiasm in others which would eagerly accept, propagate, and multiply the miracles which avouched his sanctity.

How perfectly the whole atmosphere was impregnated with this inexhaustible yearning for the supernatural, appears from the ardour with which the monastic passions were indulged at the earliest age. Children were nursed and trained to expect at every instant more than human interferences; their young energies had ever before them examples of asceticism, to which it was the glory, the true felicity of life, to aspire. The thoughtful child had all his mind thus pre-occupied; he was early, it might almost seem intuitively, trained to this course of life; wherever there was gentleness, modesty, the timidity of young passion, repugnance to vice, an imaginative temperament, a consciousness of unfitness to wrestle with the rough realities of life, the way lay invitingly open—the difficult, it is true, and painful, but

direct and unerring way—to heaven. It lay through perils, but was made attractive by perpetual wonders; it was awful, but in its awfulness lay its power over the young mind. It learned to trample down that last bond which united the child to common humanity, filial reverence; the fond and mysterious attachment of the child and the mother, the in-born reverence of the son to the father. It is the highest praise of St. Fulgentius that he overcame his mother's tenderness by religious cruelty.^k

History, to be true, must condescend to speak the language of legend; the belief of the times is part of the record of the times; and, though there may occur what may baffle its more calm and searching philosophy, it must not disdain that which was the primal, almost universal, motive of human life.

Benedict was born at Nursia, in the province of Spoleto, of respectable parents. He was sent A.D. 480. to Rome, according to still-prevailing custom, to be instructed in the liberal arts. But his pure spirit shrunk instinctively from the vices of the capital. He gave up the perilous study of letters, and preferred a holy ignorance.^l He fled secretly from the society of his dangerous associates, from the house of his parents, who, it seems, had accompanied him, as of old the father of Horace his son, to Rome.^m His faithful nurse alone discovered his design and accompanied his flight. This incident seems to imply that his flight took place

^k The approving bishop said, "Facile potest juvenis tolerare quemcunque imposuerit laborem qui poterit maternum jam despicere dolorem."—Fulgent. Vit. apud Mabillon.

^l "Scienter nesciens, et sapienter

indoctus." Such are the words of Gregory the Great.—Dial. 1. 2.

^m Compare (how strange the comparison!) the life of Horace and the life of S. Benedict.

at a very tender age; a circumstance, told at a later period, intimates that it was not before the first impulses of youthful passion. He took refuge in a small village called Effide, about two miles from Subiaco. The rustic inhabitants, pleased with his modesty and sweetness of disposition, allowed him to in-^{Youth of Benedict.}habit a cell near their church. Here took place his first miracle. The faithful nurse, Cyrilla, had borrowed a stone sieve, commonly used in that part of the country to make bread. It fell from her hands, and broke in two. Benedict, moved by her distress, united the two pieces, prayed over them, and the vessel became whole. The wondering rustics are said to have hung the miraculously restored sieve over the church door. But the sensitive youth shrunk from fame, as he had from vice: he sought a deeper solitude. In the neighbourhood of Subiaco, by the advice and assistance of a monk, named Romanus, he found a wild and inaccessible cavern, into which he crept, and for three years the softly and delicately educated boy lay hid in this cold and dismal dwelling from the sight of men. His scanty food was supplied by Romanus, who took it by stealth from his own small pittance in his monastery. The cave was at the foot of the hill on which the monastery stood, but there was no path down the precipitous rock. The food, therefore, was let down by a rope, and a small bell tied to the rope gave notice of its coming. Once the devil broke the rope; but he could not baffle the inventive charity of Romanus. To an imagination so prepared, what scene could be more suited to nurture the disposition to wonders and visions than the wild and romantic region about Subiaco? The cave of Benedict is still shown as a hallowed place, high on the crest of a toppling rock, with the Anio roaring beneath in a deep

ravine, clothed with the densest forest, and looking on another wild, precipitous crag. Half way up the zigzag and laborious path stands the convent of Benedict's sister, St. Scolastica.ⁿ So entirely was Benedict cut off from the world that he ceased to mark not merely the progress of ordinary time, but even the fasts and festivals of the Church. A certain priest had prepared for himself some food of unusual delicacy for the festival of Easter. A mysterious admonition within his heart reproved him for this luxurious indulgence, while the servant of God was pining with hunger. Who he was, this holy and heaven-designated servant, or where he dwelt, the priest knew not, but he was led through the tangled thickets and over the rugged rocks to the cave of Benedict. Benedict was ignorant that it was Easter, and not till he was assured that it was that festal day, would he share in the heaven-sent banquet.

The secret of his hiding-place was thus betrayed, and some of the rude shepherds of the country, seeing the hermit in his coarse attire, which was no more than a sheep-skin thrown round him, mistook him at first for a wild beast: but when they approached him, they were so melted by his gentle eloquence, that their hearts yielded at once, and they were subdued to courtesy of manners and Christian belief. But the young hermit had not escaped the notice or the jealousy of the enemy of mankind. One day (we must not omit puerilities so

ⁿ According to the annalist of the order, Subiaco, properly Sub-lacu, was a town at the foot of a lake made by the waters of the Anio, which had been dammed up by the Emperor Claudius. On the 20th February, 1325 the lake burst its dam, swept

away the road and bridge to San Lorenzo, and left only its dry bed, through which the torrent of the Anio still pours.—Annal. Ordin. Benedict. i. c. viii. The old monastery must have been on a peak higher than Benedict's cave.

characteristic, and this is gravely related by a late serious and learned writer) he appeared in the shape of a blackbird, and flapped him over the eyes with his wings, so as almost to blind him. The evil one took a more dangerous form, the unforgotten image of a beautiful woman whom young Benedict had known at Rome (he could not, then, have left it so very young). This was a perilous probation, and it was only by rushing forth and rolling his naked body upon the brambles and sharp points of the rocks that Benedict obtained the hard-wrung victory. Never after this, as he said to his familiar friends, was he exposed to these fleshly trials. Yet his warfare was not over. He had triumphed over sensual lust, he was to be tempted by religious ambition. A convent of monks in the neighbourhood, excited by the fame of his sanctity, determined to choose Benedict for their head. He fairly warned them of the rigorous and uncompromising discipline which he should think it his duty to enforce. Either fondly believing their own sincerity, or presuming on the latent gentleness of Benedict, they could not be dissuaded from the design. But in a short time the firm severity of the young abbot roused their fierce resentment; hatred succeeded to reverence and love. They attempted to poison him; but the cup with the guilty potion burst asunder in the hands of Benedict, who calmly reproved them for their crime, prayed for the divine forgiveness, reminded them of his own warnings before he undertook their government, and withdrew into his happier solitude.

It was no longer a solitude. The sanctity of Benedict, and the fame of his miracles, drew together daily fresh aspirants to the holiness or the quietness of his recluse life. In a short time arose

Fame of
Benedict.

in the poetic district, on the peaks and rent clefts, under the oaks and chestnuts round Subiaco, twelve monasteries, each containing twelve votaries (Benedict considered that less or more than this number led to negligence or to discord). The names of many of these cloisters designate their romantic sites; the Monastery of the Cavern, St. Angelo and St. Clement by the Lake, St. John by the Stream, St. Victor at the foot of the Mountain; Eternal Life, or the Holy Valley; and one now called Santa Scolastica, rising amid embowering woods on a far-seen ridge of the Apennines. The fame of these institutions soon spread to Rome. Some of the nobles joined the young fraternities, others sent their sons for the benefit of a severe and religious education; and already considerable endowments in farms and other possessions were bestowed by the piety and gratitude of parents or admirers. Maurus (afterwards St. Maur) was one of these young nobles, who became before long the friend, assistant, and successor of Benedict. To Maurus was soon attributed a share in the miraculous powers, as in the holiness of Benedict. Though wells of waters had broken out at the prayer of Benedict on the thirsty summits of the rocks, where the hermitages hung aloft, they were not always at hand or always full. A noble youth of fifteen, Placidus, in drawing water from the lake, fell in, and was carried by the waves far from the shore. Benedict cried to Maurus to assist. Maurus rushed in, and walking on the water, drew out the fainting youth by the hair. A contest of humility began: Maurus attributed the wonder to the holiness of his master, Benedict to the devotion of Maurus. It was decided by the youth, who declared that he had seen the sheepskin cloak of Benedict hovering over him. It

would not be difficult to admit all the facts of this miracle, which might be easily accounted for by the excitement of all parties.

It is strange to see the blackest crimes constantly, as it were, in collision with this high-wrought holiness. Florentius, a neighbouring priest, ^{The Priest Florentius.} was envious of the holy Benedict. He attempted to poison him in some bread which he sent as a present.* Benedict had a prescient consciousness of the treason; and a raven at his command flew away with the infected food. Florentius, baffled in his design upon the life of the master, plotted against the souls of the disciples. He turned seven naked girls into the garden of one of the monasteries. Benedict determined to withdraw from the dangerous neighbourhood. He had set forth on his journey when Maurus hastily overtook him, and, not without some signs of joy, communicated the tidings of the death of Florentius. The wicked priest had been buried in the ruins of his chamber, which had fallen in, while the rest of the house remained standing. Benedict wept over the fate of his enemy, and imposed penance on his disciple for his unseemly and unchristian rejoicing in the calamity even of the wicked.

Benedict pursued his way (as the more poetic legend added, under the guidance of two visible angels) to Monte Casino, about fifty miles from Subiaco. On Monte Casino still arose a temple of Apollo amid its sacred grove; and in the midst, as it were, of Christianity, the pagan peasants brought their offerings to their ancient god. But there was no human resistance

* Compare the attempt of the ambitious archdeacon to poison the aged Bishop of Canosa. The bishop drank the cup, having made the sign of the cross, and the archdeacon fell dead, as if the poison had found its way to his stomach.—Greg. Dial. iii. 5

when the zealous recluse destroyed the profane and stately edifice, broke the idol, overturned the altar, and cut down the grove. Unreluctant the people received the religion of Christ from the eloquent lips of Benedict. The enemy of mankind attempted some obstruction to the building of the church devoted to St. Martin. The obstinate stones would not move but at the prayers of Benedict. They fell and crushed the builders, who were healed by his intercession. The last stronghold of paganism was replaced by a Benedictine monastery; and here arose that great model republic, which gave its laws to almost the whole of Western Monasticism. If we might imagine the pagan deity to have any real and conscious being, and to represent the Sun, he might behold the monastic form of Christianity, which rose on the ruins of his ancient worship, almost as universally spread throughout the world, as of old the adoration of his visible majesty.

Three virtues constituted the sum of the Benedictine discipline. Silence with solitude and seclusion, humility, obedience, which, in the strong language of its laws, extended to impossibilities. All is thus concentrated on self. It was the man isolated from his kind who was to rise to a lonely perfection. All the social, all patriotic virtues were excluded: the mere mechanic observance of the rules of the brotherhood, or even the corporate spirit, are hardly worthy of notice, though they are the only substitutes for the rejected and proscribed pursuits of active life.

The three occupations of life were the worship of God, reading, and manual labour. The adventitious advantages, and great they were, of these industrious agricultural settlements, were not contemplated by the founder: the object of the monks was not to make the wilderness

blossom with fertility, to extend the arts and husbandry of civilised life into barbarous regions, it was solely to employ in engrossing occupation that portion of time which could not be devoted to worship and to study.^p

For the divine service the monks awoke at midnight; they retired again, and rose after a brief repose for matins. After matins they did not return to their beds, but spent the time in reading, meditation, or the singing of psalms. From prime to noon, and all after the brief meal, and another period of reading or meditation, was devoted to labour. At particular periods, as at harvest, the labouring brothers did not return home to their religious service; they knelt and performed it in the fields. The mass was not celebrated on ordinary days, only on Sundays and holidays.

Abstinence from flesh, at least that of four-footed animals, was perpetual and universal; from that of fowls was prescribed with less rigour. The usual food was vegetable broth, bread, and a small measure of wine. From Easter to Pentecost there was no fast. From Pentecost to the ides of September, fasts on two days in the week; the rest of the year to Easter perpetual fast, with one evening meal of eggs or fish. Lent was still more rigorously enforced by abstinence not from food only, but from sleep and from speech. The punishment of delinquents was sequestration from the oratory, the table, and the common meetings; the contumacious and incorrigible were expelled from the community. The monastery contained within its walls the mill, the bakehouse, and everything necessary for life. It was strictly forbidden to partake of food without the walls; all wan-

^p "Cuius piæ mentis agitationi," says Mabillon, p. 52.

dering to any distance was prohibited; and if the monk was obliged to be absent during the whole day, he was enjoined to fast rather than partake of food abroad.

So were self-doomed to live the monks of St. Benedict; so all monks, whose number is incalculable, for the long centuries during which Latin Christianity ruled the western world. The two sexes were not merely to be strangers, but natural, irreconcilable enemies. This strong repulsion was carried not only into their judgements upon themselves, but into their judgements of those who were yet in the world without. All monks inevitably embraced, with the most extreme severity, the dominant notion of the absolute sinfulness of all sexual intercourse; at least, its utter incompatibility with religious service. A noble lady is possessed with a legion of devils, for compliance with her husband, before a procession in honour of the bones of St. Sebastian. The less questionable natural affections were proscribed with equal severity. Attachment to the order was to be the one absorbing affection. A boy monk, who loved his parents too fondly and stole forth to visit them, was not merely suddenly struck with death, but the holy earth refused to retain his body, and cast it forth with indignation. It was only by the influence of Benedict, who commanded the Holy Eucharist to be placed upon the body, that it was permitted to repose in the grave.¹

¹ Gregor. Dial. i. 10. There is another strange story of the power of Benedict: he had excommunicated certain nuns for the unbridled use of their tongues. They were buried, however, in the church. But when the sacrament was next administered, at the voice of the deacon, commanding all who did not communicate to depart, the bodies rose from their graves and walked out of the church. This was seen by their nurse, who communicated the fact to Benedict. The pitying saint commanded an oblation to be made for them, and ever after they rested quietly in their graves.—Greg. Dial. ii. 23.

But the later days of Benedict, at Monte Casino, though adorned with perpetual miracle, did not seclude him or his peaceful votaries from the disastrous times which overwhelmed Italy during the fall of the Gothic monarchy and the re-conquest by the Eastern Emperor. War respected not these holy sanctuaries; and in prophetic vision Benedict saw his establishment laid waste, and all its lofty buildings in ruins before the ravages of the spoiler. He was consoled, however, it is added, by visions of the extension of his rule throughout Europe, and the rise of flourishing Benedictine monasteries in every part of the West. Nor were the virtues of Benedict without influence in assuaging the horrors of the war. Totila himself, the last and not least noble Gothic sovereign, came to consult the prophetic saint of Monte Casino as an oracle. He attempted to practise a deception upon him, by dressing one of his chieftains in the royal attire. Benedict at once detected the fraud, and Riggo, the chieftain, returned to his master, deeply impressed with awe at the supernatural knowledge of the saint. Totila himself, it is said, fell prostrate at the feet of Benedict, who raised him up, solemnly rebuked his cruelties, foretold his conquest of Rome, his passage of the sea, his reign of nine years, his death during the tenth. The greater humanity with which Totila from this time conducted the war, his severity against his soldiers for the violation of female chastity, the virtues, in short, of this gallant warrior, are attributed to this interview with Benedict. Considering the uncertainty of the date assigned to this event, it is impossible to estimate how far the fierce warrior was already under the control of those Christian feelings which led him to seek the solitude of the saint, or was really awe-struck

into more thoughtful religiousness by these prophetic admonitions.*

Benedict did not live to witness the ruin of Monte Casino; his sister, St. Scolastica, preceded him in her death but a few days. There is something striking in the attachment of the brother and sister, the human affection struggling with the hard spirit of monasticism. St. Scolastica was a female Benedict. Equally devout, equally powerful in attracting and ruling the minds of recluses of her own sex, the remote foundress of convents almost as numerous as those of her brother's rule. With the most perfect harmony of disposition, one in holiness, one in devotion, they were of different sexes, and met but once a year. The feminine weakness of the dying Scolastica for once extorted an unwilling breach of his rule from her severer brother.† He had come to visit her, probably for the last time; she entreated him to rest for the night in her convent; but Benedict had never, so spake his own laws, passed a night out of his own monastery. But Heaven was more indulgent than the monk. Scolastica reclined her head in profound prayer. Suddenly the serene sky was overcast, lightnings and thunders flashed and roared around, the rain fell in torrents. "The Lord have mercy upon you, my sister!" said Benedict; "what have you done?" "You," she replied, "have rejected my prayers; but the Lord hath not. Go now, if you can." They passed the night in devout spiritual

* There are several other anecdotes of Totila in the Dialogues of Gregory. He went to consult the Bishop of Canosa, as a prophet, and tried to deceive him. See likewise the odd story of Cassius, Bishop of Narni, whom Totila,

from his red nose, unjustly suspected of drunkenness. In several other instances Totila was compelled to reverence the sanctity of bishops, whom he had begun to persecute.—c. x. and xi.

† Greg. Dial. 2, xxxiii.

exercises. Three days after Benedict saw the soul of his sister soaring to heaven in the shape of a dove. Only a short time elapsed, and Benedict was seized with a mortal sickness. Six days before his death he ordered his grave to be opened, and at the end breathed his last in prayer. His death was not without its prophetic announcements. It was revealed to a monk in his cell at Monte Casino, and to his chosen disciple, St. Maurus, who had already left Italy to establish the rule of his master in the monasteries of Gaul. In a convent near Auxerre, Maurus was rapt in spirit, and beheld a way strewn with garments and lighted with lamps, which led direct from the cell of Benedict to heaven. "May God enable us to follow our master along this heavenward way." Benedict was buried in the oratory of John the Baptist, which stood upon the site of the sanctuary of Apollo.

The vision of St. Benedict of the universal diffusion of his order was accomplished with a rapidity wonderful even in those times. In Italy, from Calabria to the Alps, Benedictine monasteries began to rise on the brows of beetling mountains, sometimes in quiet valleys. Their buildings gradually grew in spaciousness and splendour;^{*} nor did they absolutely abandon the cities, as dangerous to themselves or beyond the sphere of their exemplary rigour. Few, if any of the great towns are without their Benedictine convent. Every monastery sent forth its colonies. The monks seemed to multiply with greater fecundity than the population of the most flourishing cities, and were obliged to throw off

^{*} It did not often happen that a monastery, ashamed of its magnificence, like one built by the desire, out not according to the modest notions,

of S. Waltruda, fell of its own accord, and gave place to a humbler edifice.--Mabillon, Ann. i. p. 405.

their redundant brethren to some new settlement. They swarmed, according to their language, like bees." Wherever was the abode of men was the abode of these recluses, who had put off the ordinary habits, attire, occupations of men; wherever they settled in the waste wilderness men gathered around them, as if to partake of their sanctity and security.^x Maurus the faithful friend and associate of Benedict, had crossed the Alps even before his death. Bishop Innocent, of Le Mans, who had invited him to Gaul, had died before his arrival; but he was hospitably received in Orleans. The first Benedictine monastery in France rose at Glanfeuille, on the Loire, not far from Angers; it was but the first of many rich and noble foundations—foundations which, as they grew in wealth and splendour, and, in consequence, in luxury and ease, were either themselves brought back by some stern reformer, who wrought them up to their old austere discipline, or rivalled and supplanted by new monasteries, which equalled or surpassed the rigour of Benedict himself.^y The name of St. Maur is dear to letters. Should his

^x "Tanquam apes ex cœnobiali alveario de more egressi, nova monasteria, sive dicas cellas, construere amabant." —Note of Angelo della Noce, Abbot of Monte Casino, on the Chron. Casinen.

^y The Benedictine rule was universally received even in the older monasteries of Gaul, Britain, Spain, and throughout the West; not as that of a rival order (all rivalry was of later date), but as a more full and perfect rule of the monastic life; as simply completing the less consummate work of Cassian, Martin of Tours, or Columban. It gave, therefore, not only a

new impulse to monasticism, as founding new monasteries, but as quickening the older ones into new life and energy.

^y Noirmoutier, founded by S. Meudon, accepted the rule of S. Benedict, and became the head of the Benedictine order in France; other great monasteries were S. Benignus at Dijon; St. Denys; the Chaise Dieu, near Puy de Velay; Fleury, near the Loire. In England, Canterbury, Westminster, Glastonbury, St. Albans. In the north, Wearmouth, Yarrow, Lindisfarne. — Helyot.

disciples have in some degree departed from the iron rule of their founder, the world, even the enlightened Christian world, will pardon them if their profound and useful studies have withdrawn them from mechanical and automatic acts of devotion. In Spain the monasteries mostly fell in the general wreck of Christianity on the Mahommedan conquest; few scanty and doubtful records survived, to be gleaned by the industry of their successors, as Christianity slowly won back the land.²

With St. Augustine the rule of St. Benedict passed to England; but there it might seem as if the realm, instead of banishing them, or permitting their self-banishment, to the wild heath or the mountain crest, had chosen for them, or allowed them to choose, the fairest spots in the land for their settlements. In every rich valley, by the side of every clear and deep stream, arose a Benedictine Abbey. The labours of the monks in planting, in cultivation, in laying out the sunny garden, or hanging the hill with trees, may have added much to the picturesque grace of these scenes; but, in general, if a district in England be surveyed, the most convenient, most fertile, most peaceful spot, will be found to have been the site of a Benedictine abbey.

Their numbers at any one time it may be difficult to estimate.³ Abbeys rose and fell, like other human institutions; the more favoured, however, handed down the sacred tradition of their foundation, of their endow-

² Flores, España Sagrada, passim. This valuable work gives the religious history of Spain, according to its provinces, so that the annals of each church or abbey must be followed out.

³ Mabillon, Ann. Ordin. Benedict. passim. The number of great monasteries founded in Italy, Rhenane Germany, and France, between 520 and 700, is astonishing. There are some after the conversion of Recared, Toledo, Merida, &c., in Spain.

ments, of their saints, of their miracles, of their good deeds to civilisation, till the final wreck of monastic institutions during the last century ; and even from that wreck a few have survived, or lifted up again their venerable heads.^b

^b Sarpi (p. 78, delle Mater Benefic.) | ing that in his day there were 15,000
quotes the Abbot Trithemius as assert- | Benedictine converts.

CHAPTER VII

Gregory the Great.

THE sixth century of Christianity was drawing towards its close. Anarchy threatened the whole West of Europe; it had already almost enveloped Italy in ruin and desolation. Italy had been a Gothic kingdom, it was now a province of the Eastern Empire. Rome had been a provincial city of Theodoric's kingdom, it was now a provincial, at least only the second, city in the monarchy of Justinian. But the Byzantine government, though it had overthrown the Gothic kingdom, had exhausted itself in the strife. The eunuch Narses had drained by his avarice that wealth which had begun to recover under the vigour of his peaceful administration. But Narses, according to the popular belief, had revenged himself upon the groaning province, which had appealed to Constantinople against his oppressive rule, and upon the jealous Emperor who had feared his greatness. He had summoned the Lombards to cross the Alps. The death of Narses had left his successor, the Exarch of Ravenna, only the dignity of a sovereignty which he was too weak to exercise for any useful purpose of government. Already the Lombards occupied great part of the north of Italy, and were extending their desolating inroads towards the south. The terrors of the defenceless province cowered before, no doubt exaggerated, the barbarity of these new invaders. The Catholics and the Romans had

Close of sixth century.

Lombard invasion.

leagued with the East to throw off the Gothic yoke; they were not even to rest under the more oppressive rule of their new masters; they were to be the prey, the victims, the slaves of a new race of barbarians. The Goths had been to a great degree civilised and Romanised before their conquest of Italy; their enlightened rulers had endeavoured to subdue them to the arts of peace, at least to a less destructive system of warfare. The Lombards were still obstinate barbarians; the Christianity which they had partially embraced was Arianism; and it had in no degree, if justly described, mitigated the ferocity of their manners. They had no awe of religious men, no reverence for religious places; they burned churches, laid waste monasteries, slew ecclesiastics, and violated consecrated virgins with no more dread or remorse than ordinary buildings or profane enemies.^a So profound was the terror of the Lombard invasion, that the despairing Italians, even the highest ecclesiastics, beheld it as an undoubted sign of the coming day of judgement. The great writer of the times describes the depopulated cities, the ruined castles, the churches burned, the monasteries of males and females destroyed, the farms wasted and left without cultivation, the whole land a solitude, and wild beasts wandering over fields once occupied by multitudes of human beings. He draws the inevitable conclusion: "what is happening in other parts of the world we know not, but in this the end of all things not merely announces itself as approaching, but shows itself as actually begun."^b This terror of the Lombards

^a On the ravages in Italy by these conflicts, Greg. Epist. v. 21, xlii. Dial. iii. sub fin: compare iv. 38. 41. Gregory was fully persuaded

^b "Finem suum mundus jam non of the approaching Day of Judge-

seemed to survive and to settle down into an unmitigated detestation. Throughout the legends of the piety and the miracles wrought by bishops and monks in every part of Italy, the most cruel and remorseless persecutor is always a Lombard.^c And this hatred was not in the least softened when the popes, rising to greater power, became to a certain extent the defenders of Italy; it led them joyfully to hail the appearance of the more warlike and orthodox Franks, whom first the Emperor Maurice, and afterwards the popes, summoned finally to crush the sinking kingdom of the Lombards. The internecine and inextinguishable hatred of the Church, and probably of the Roman provincials, to the Lombards, had many powerful workings on the fortunes of Italy and of the popedom.

The Byzantine conquest had not only crushed the independence of reviving Italy, prevented the quiet infusion of Gothic blood and of Gothic institutions into the frame of society; it had almost succeeded in trampling down the ecclesiastical dignity of Rome. There are few popes whose reigns have been so inglorious as those of the immediate successors of that unhappy Vigilius, who closed his disastrous and dishonourable life at a distance from his see, Pelagius I., Benedict I., Pelagius II. They rose at the command, must obsequiously obey the mandates, not of the Emperor, but of the Emperor's representative, the Exarch of Ravenna. They must endure, even if under solemn but
A.D. 553
to 590.
unregarded protests, the pretensions of the bishop of the Emperor's capital, to equality, perhaps to

ment. The world gave manifest signs of its old age.—Hom. v. on Matt. c. 10.

^c See the Dialogues of Gregory, passim, and frequent notices in the Epistles.

superiority. Western bishops seem to take advantage of their weakness, and supported, as they expect to be, by Imperial Constantinople, defy their patriarch.

Times of emergency call forth great men—men at least, if not great in relation to the true intellectual, moral, and spiritual dignity of man, great in relation to the state and to the necessities of their age; engrossed by the powerful and dominant principles of their time, and bringing to the advancement of those principles surpassing energies of character, inflexible resolution, the full conviction of the wisdom, justice, and holiness of their cause, in religious affairs of the direct and undeniable sanction of God. Such was Gregory I., to whom his own age and posterity have assigned the appellation of the Great.

Now was the crisis in which the Papacy must re-awaken its obscured and suspended life. It was the only power which lay not entirely and absolutely prostrate before the disasters of the times—a power which had an inherent strength, and might resume its majesty. It was this power which was most imperatively required to preserve all which was to survive out of the crumbling wreck of Roman civilisation. To Western Christianity was absolutely necessary a centre, standing alone, strong in traditionary reverence, and in acknowledged claims to supremacy. Even the perfect organisation of the Christian hierarchy might in all human probability have fallen to pieces in perpetual conflict: it might have degenerated into a half secular feudal caste with hereditary benefices, more and more entirely subservient to the civil authority, a priesthood of each nation or each tribe, gradually sinking to the intellectual or religious level of the nation or tribe. On the rise of a power both controlling and conservative, hung, humanly

speaking, the life and death of Christianity—of Christianity as a permanent, aggressive, expansive, and, to a certain extent, uniform system. There must be a counterbalance to barbaric force, to the unavoidable anarchy of Teutonism, with its tribal, or at the utmost national independence, forming a host of small, conflicting, antagonistic kingdoms. All Europe would have been what England was under the Octarchy, what Germany was when her emperors were weak; and even her emperors she owed to Rome, to the Church, to Christianity. Providence might have otherwise ordained; but it is impossible for man to imagine by what other organising or consolidating force the commonwealth of the Western nations could have grown up to a discordant, indeed, and conflicting league, but still to a league, with that unity and conformity of manners, usages, laws, religion, which have made their rivalries, oppugnancies, and even their long ceaseless wars, on the whole to issue in the noblest, highest, most intellectual form of civilisation known to man. It is inconceivable that Teutonic Europe, or Europe so deeply interpenetrated with Teutonism, could have been condensed or compelled into a vast Asiatic despotism, or succession of despotisms. Immense and interminable as have been the evils and miseries of the conflict between the southern and northern, the Teutonic and Roman, the hierarchical and civil elements of our social system; yet out of these conflicts has at length arisen the balance and harmony of the great states which constitute European Christendom and are now peopling other continents with kindred and derivative institutions. It is impossible to conceive what had been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the middle ages, without the me-

diæval Papacy; and of the mediæval Papacy the real father is Gregory the Great. In all his predecessors there was much of the uncertainty and indefiniteness of a new dominion. Christianity had converted the Western world—it had by this time transmuted it: in all except the Roman law, it was one with it. Even Leo the Great had something of the Roman dictator. Gregory is the Roman altogether merged in the Christian bishop. It is a Christian dominion, of which he lays the foundations in the Eternal City, not the old Rome associating Christian influence to her ancient title of sovereignty.

Gregory united in himself every qualification and
Birth and
descent of
Gregory. endowment which could command the veneration and attachment of Rome and of his age.^d In his descent he blended civil and ecclesiastical nobility. He was of a senatorial family: his father bore the imperial name of Gordian, his mother that of Sylvia. A pope (Felix II.) was his ancestor in the fourth degree—the pope who had built the church of SS. Cosmas and Damianus, close to the temple of Romulus. Two sainted virgins, Thirsilla and Sylvia, were his aunts. To his noble descent was added considerable wealth; and all that wealth, directly he became master of it by the death of his father, was at once devoted to religious uses. He founded and endowed, perhaps from Sicilian estates, six monasteries in that island; a seventh, in Rome, he chose for his own retreat; and having lavished on the poor all his costly

^d Homil. 38, in Evang. Dialog. Epist. iv. 16; Joh. Diac. in Vit. The date of his birth is uncertain; it was about the year 540.—Lau, Gregor I. der Grosse, page 10.

robes, his silk, his gold, his jewels, his furniture, he violently wrenched himself from the secular life (in which he had already attained to the dignity of prætor of the city^e), and not even assuming the abbacy of his convent, but beginning with the lowest monastic duties, he devoted himself altogether to God.^f His whole time was passed in prayer, reading, writing, and dictation.^g The fame of his unprecedented abstinence and boundless charity spread abroad, and, as usual, took the form of miracle. He had so destroyed his health by fasting, vigil, and study, that his brethren were obliged to feed him by compulsion. His life hung on a thread, and he feared that he should not have strength to observe the indispensable fast even on Good Friday. By the prayers of the holy Eleutherius his stomach was endowed with supernatural strength, and never after (he had manifestly, however, undermined his constitution) refused the sacred duty of abstinence.^h His charity was tried by an angel in the garb of a shipwrecked sailor, whose successive visits exhausted all he had, except a silver vessel set apart for the use of his mother. This too he gave, and the satisfied angel at length revealed himself.ⁱ

^e He describes his secular state, *Præfat. ad Job.* “*Diu longæque conversionis gratiam distuli, et postquam cœlesti sum desiderio affectus, seculari habitu contegi melius putavi. . . . Cumque adhuc me cogeret animus præsentī mundo quasi specie tenus deservire, cœperunt multa contra me ex ejusdem mundi curâ succrescere, ut in eo jam non specie, sed quod est gravius, mente retinerem.*”

^f The date of Gregory's monkhood

is again uncertain—probably not earlier than 573, nor later than 577.—*Lau*, p. 21.

^g *Greg. Tur. x. 1.* According to Jaffé, the Register of Gregory's Letters not only marks the year (the indication), but the month of their date.

^h *Dial. iii. 13; Joh. Diac. i. p. 9.*

ⁱ See *Præf. ad Dial.*, a pleasing passage, in which, oppressed by the cares and troubles of the papacy, he looks back on the quiet of his monastery.

The monastery of St. Andrew was a perpetual scene of preternatural wonder. Fugitive monks were seized upon by devils, who confessed their power to Gregory; others were favoured with visits of angels summoning them to peace; and one brother, whose whole life, excepting the intervals of food and sleep, was spent in psalmody, was not merely crowned by invisible hands with white flowers, but fourteen years after, a fragrance, as of the concentrated sweetness of all flowers, breathed from his tomb. Such was the poetry of those days.

Gregory became abbot;^k and that severe discipline which he had imposed upon himself, he enforced with relentlessness, which hardened into cruelty, upon others. Many were tempted to embrace the monastic life who had not resolution to adhere to it, who found no consolation in its peace, and grew weary of its monotonous devotion. Fugitive monks were constantly revolting back to the world which they had forsaken: on these Gregory had no mercy. On the more faithful he exercised a tyranny of discipline which crushed out of the heart not only every lingering attachment to the world, but every sense and pulsation of humanity. The most singular history of this discipline, combining ingratitude and cruelty under the guise of duty, with a strange confidence in his own powers of appeasing the divine wrath, and in the influence of the eucharistic sacrifice, is the death of Justus, related by Gregory himself. Before he became a monk, Justus had practised physic. During the long illness of

^k Lau insists, I think on unsatisfactory grounds, that he was abbot only after his return from Constantinople.—p. 37.

Gregory, Justus, now a monk, had attended him day and night with affectionate care and skill. On his own death-bed Justus betrayed to his brother that he possessed three pieces of gold. This was in direct violation of that law as to community of property established in the monastery. After long search the guilty money was found concealed in some medicine. Gregory determined to strike the offender with a due sense of his crime, and to awe the brotherhood by the terror of his example. He prohibited every one from approaching the bed of the dying man, the new Simon Magus. No word of consolation or of hope was to soothe his departure. His brother alone might approach to tell him that he died detested by all the community. Nor did the inhuman disciplinarian rest here. The body was cast out upon the dunghill, with the three pieces of gold, the whole convent shouting aloud, "Thy money perish with thee!" After thirty days of fiery burnings, the inevitable fate of an unabsolved outlaw, the heart of Gregory began to relent. He permitted the mass to be celebrated for the afflicted soul. The sacrifice was offered for thirty days more, at the end of which the spirit of Justus appeared to his brother, and assured him of his release from penal torture.^m

But a mind of such force and ability as Gregory's could not be permitted to slumber in the holy quiet of a monastery. He himself began to comprehend that there were higher religious avocations and nobler services to God. He was still a monk of St. Andrew when that incident took place which, by the divine blessing, led to

^m "Mira sunt quæ narras et non mediocriter lata." Such, at the close of this story, is the quaint language of Gregory's obsequious hearer. *Greg. Mag. Dial. iv. 55.*

the conversion of our Saxon ancestors. The tale, though often repeated, is too pleasing not to find a place here. In the market-place of Rome Gregory saw some beautiful and fair-haired boys exposed for sale. He inquired from whence they came. "From Britain." "Are they Christians?" "They are still pagans." "Alas! that the Prince of Darkness should possess forms of such loveliness! That such beauty of countenance should want that better beauty of the soul!" He asked of what nation they were. "Angles" was the reply. "Truly," he said, "they are angels! From what province?" "That of Deira." "Truly they must be rescued *de irâ* (from the wrath of God). What is the name of their king?" "Ælla." "Yea," said Gregory, "Alleluia must be sung in the dominions of that king."

Gregory
aspires to
convert
Britain.

To be the first missionary to this beautiful people, and win this remote and barbarous island, like a Christian Cæsar, to the realm of Christ, became the holy ambition of Gregory. His long-suppressed humanity burst forth in this new channel. He extorted the unwilling consent of the Pope: he had actually set forth, and travelled three days' journey, when he was overtaken by messengers sent to recall him. All Rome had risen in pious mutiny, and compelled the Pope to revoke his permission.

But Gregory was not to retire again to his monastery.

Gregory in
Constanti-
nople.

He was forced to embark in public affairs. He was ordained deacon (he was one of the seven deacons of the Church of Rome, the *Regionarii*), and sent by Pope Benedict on an important embassy to Constantinople. But his occupations were not confined to his negotiations with the court. He was the Pope's *apocrisarius* or secretary. These negotiations were but partially successful. He reconciled, indeed, the two

successive emperors, Tiberius and Maurice, with the person of the Pope, Pelagius; but the aid against the Lombards was sent reluctantly, tardily, inefficiently. The schism between the East and West was still unallayed. He entered into a characteristic controversy with Eutychius, Bishop of Constantinople, on the nature of the body after the resurrection.ⁿ The metaphysical Greek imagined an impalpable body, finer and more subtile than the air. The Western theologian, unembarrassed by the materialism from which the Greek endeavoured to escape, strenuously asserted the unrefined identity of the renovated body with that of the living man.

In Constantinople^o Gregory commenced, if he did not complete, his great work, the ‘Magna Moralia, or Exposition of the Book of Job,’ at which the West stood astonished, and which may even now excite our wonder at the vast superstructure raised on such narrow foundations. The book of Job, according to Gregory, comprehended in itself all natural, all Christian theology, and all morals. It was at once a true and wonderful history, an allegory containing, in its secret sense, the whole theory of the Christian Church and Christian sacraments, and a moral philosophy applicable to all mankind. As an interpreter of the history, Gregory was entirely ignorant of all the Oriental languages, even of Greek.^p He read the book partly according to

ⁿ The controversy must have been somewhat perplexing, as Gregory was ignorant of Greek, and good translators were not to be found. “Quia hodie in Constantinopolitanâ civitate, qui de Latino in Græcum dictata *bene* transferant non sunt. Dum enim verba custodiunt et sensus minimè attendunt,

nec verba intelligi faciunt, et sensus frangunt.”—Greg. Mag. Epist. vii. 30.

• Gregory resided three years in Constantinople: 584-587.

^p “Nam nos nec Græcè novimus, nec aliquod opus Græcè aliquando conscripsimus.”—Greg. Mag. Epist. ix. 69.

the older, partly according to the later Latin version. Of ancient or of Oriental manners he knew nothing. Of the book of Job as a poem (the most sublime of all antiquity) he had no conception: to him it is all pure, unimagined, unembellished history. As an allegory,

Magna
Moralia.

it is surprising with what copious ingenuity Gregory discovers latent adumbrations of all the great Christian doctrines, and still more the unrelenting condemnation of heresies and of heretics. The moral interpretation may be read at the present time, if with no great admiration at the depth of the philosophy, with respect for its loftiness and purity. It is ascetic, but generally, except when heretics are concerned, devout, humane and generous.⁹

So congenial, however, was this great work to the Christian mind, that many bishops began to read it publicly in the churches; and it was perhaps prevented from coming into general use only by the modest remonstrance of Gregory himself; and thus Gregory, if his theology and morals had been sanctioned by the authority of the Church, would have become the founder

⁹ It may be safely said that, according to Gregory's licence of interpretation, there is nothing which might not be found in any book ever written; there is no single word which may not be pregnant with unutterable mysteries, no syllable which may not mean everything, no number which may not have relation to the same number wherever it may occur, to every multiple or divisible part of such number. "The seven sons of Job mean the twelve apostles, and therefore the clergy, because seven is the perfect number, and multiplied within itself, four by three or three by four, pro-

duces twelve. The three daughters mean the faithful laity, because they are to worship the Trinity." "*In septem ergo filiis ordo predicantium, in tribus vero filiabus multitudo auditorum signatur.*" The three daughters may likewise mean the three classes of the faithful, the *pastores*, *continentes*, and *conjugati*. The curious reader may see the mystery which is found in the sheep and the camels, the oxen and the asses,—*Lib. i. c. vi.*, and *Lib. ii. c. xiv.*—where the friends of Job are shown, from the latent meaning of their names, to signify the heretics.

of a new religion. It never appears to have occurred to the piety of that or indeed of other ages, that this discovery of latent meanings in the books of inspiration, and the authoritative enforcement of those interpretations as within the scope of the Holy Spirit, is no less than to make a new revelation to mankind. It might happen that the doctrines thus discovered were only those already recognised as Christianity, and the utmost error then would be the illustration of such doctrines by forced and inapplicable texts. But it cannot be denied that by this system of exposition the sacred writings were continually made to speak the sense of the interpreter; and if once we depart from the plain and obvious meaning of the Legislator, all beyond is the enactment of a new, a supplementary, an unwarranted law. Compare the Great Morals of Gregory, not with the book of Job, but with the New Testament; and can we deny that there would have been a new authoritative proclamation of the Divine will?

So far Gregory had kept his lofty way in every situation, not only fulfilling, but surpassing, the highest demands of his age. In his personal ^{Gregory in Rome.} character austere blameless; as an abbot (he resumed on his return to Rome the abbacy in his monastery of St. Andrew), mercilessly severe, the model of a strict disciplinarian; as an ambassador, displaying consummate ability; as a controversialist, defeating in the opinion of the West the subtleties of the rival Bishop of Constantinople; as a theologian, already taking that place which was assigned him by the homage of posterity, that of the fourth great father of the Latin Church.* Soon after his return to Rome the city

* Pelag. Epist. ad Greg. apud J. Diaconum in Vit.

became a scene of misery and desolation, so that all eyes could not but be turned on a man so

A.D. 537.

highly favoured of God. The Lombard invasions continued to waste Italy; the feeble Exarch acknowledged that he had no power to protect Rome; the

State of the City.

supplications for effectual aid from Constantinople had been unavailing. More dire and pressing calamities darkened around. The Tiber overflowed its banks, and swept away the granaries of corn.

A dreadful pestilence ensued, of which the Pope Pelagius was among the first victims.^s With one voice the clergy, the senate, and the people summoned Gregory to the pontifical throne.^t His modest remonstrances were in vain. His letter entreating the Emperor Maurice to relieve him from the perilous burthen, by refusing the imperial consent to his elevation, was intercepted by

Gregory Pope.

the loving vigilance of his admirers. Among these was the prefect of the city, who substituted for Gregory's letter the general petition for his advancement. But, until the answer of the Emperor could arrive, Gregory assumed the religious direction of the people. He addressed them with deep solemnity on the plague, and persuaded them to acts of humiliation." On an appointed day the whole city joined in the religious ceremony. Seven litanies, or processions with prayers and hymns, and the greatest pomp, traversed the streets. That of the clergy set out from the Church of St. John the Baptist; that of the men from St. Marcellus; the monks from that of the martyrs John

^s The pestilence was attributed to a vast number of serpents and a great dragon, like a beam of timber, carried down the Tiber to the sea, and cast back upon the shore, where they putri-

fied, and caused the plague.—Greg. Turon.

^t 589-590, Jaffé.

[■] The speech in Greg. Tur. x. i.; Paul. Diac. Ep. ii.; Joh. Diac. i. 41.

and Paul; the holy virgins from SS. Cosmas and Damianus; the married women from St. Stephen; the widows from St. Vitalis; that of the poor and the children from St. Cæcilia. But the plague was not stayed; eighty victims fell dead during the procession;* but Gregory still urged the people to persist in their pious supplications.

To the end Gregory endeavoured to elude the compulsory honour of the Papacy. It was said that, knowing the gates to be jealously watched, he persuaded some merchants to convey him to a solitary forest in disguise; but a light, like a pillar of fire, hovered over his head, and betrayed his flight. He was seized, hurried to the Church of St. Peter, and forcibly consecrated as Supreme Pontiff.⁷

Monasticism ascended the Papal throne in the person of Gregory. In austerity, in devotion, in imaginative superstition, Gregory was a monk Monkhood of Gregory. to the end of his days.² From this turmoil of affairs,

* The picturesque legend, from which the monument of Hadrian took the name of the Castle of St. Angelo, cannot be reconciled with the Letters of Gregory. It ran, that as the last procession reached this building, an angel was seen sheathing his sword, as though the work of divine vengeance was over. The statue of the angel in this attitude commemorated the wonder.

⁷ The biographer of Gregory (John the Deacon) thinks it necessary to adduce evidence of the sincerity of this reluctance, which had been questioned by "certain perfidious Lombards." He cites a curious letter to Theoctista, the emperor's sister, among the strange

expressions in which is this: "Ecce serenissimus Dominus Imperator fieri Simiam Leonem jussit et quidem pro jussione illius vocari Leo potest; fieri autem Leo non potest." Compare letter to John of Constantinople, i. 24 and the following epistles; also Epist. vii. 4, and Regula Past. in init.

* "Cum quibus (amicis) Gregorius die nocteque versatus nihil monasticæ perfectionis in palatio, nihil pontificalis institutionis in ecclesiâ dereliquit. Videbantur passim cum eruditissimis clericis adhærere Pontifici religiosissimi monachi, et in diversissimis professionibus habebatur vita communis; ita ut talis esset tunc sub Gregorio penes urbem Romam ecclesia, qualem

civil and spiritual; the religious ambition of maintaining and extending the authority of his see; the affairs of pure Christian humanity in which he was involved, as almost the only guardian of the Roman population against the barbarian invasions; oppressed with business, with cares, with responsibilities, he perpetually reverts to the peace of his monastery, where he could estrange himself entirely from sublunary things, yield himself up to the exclusive contemplation of heaven, and look forward to death as the entrance into life.^a

But he threw off at once and altogether the dreaming indolence of the contemplative life, and plunged into affairs with the hurried restlessness of the most ambitious statesman. His letters offer a singular picture of the incessant activity of his mind, the variety and multiplicity of his occupations. Nothing seems too great, nothing too insignificant for his earnest personal solicitude; from the most minute point in the ritual, or regulations about the papal farms in Sicily, he passes to the conversion of Britain, the extirpation of simony among the clergy of Gaul, negotiations with the armed conquerors of Italy, the revolutions of the Eastern empire, the title of Universal Bishop usurped by John of Constantinople.

The character of Gregory, as the representative of

hanc fuisse sub apostolis Lucas et sub Marco Evangelistâ penes Alexandriam Phuo commemorat." Was Joh. Diaconus as ignorant of St. Luke's writings as of Philo's?—Joh. Diac. ii. 12.

^a "Infelix quippe animus meus, occupationis suæ pulsatus vulnere, meminit qualis aliquando in monasterio fuit, quomodo ei labentia cuncta subter

erant; quantum rebus omnibus, quæ voluntur, eminebat; quod nulla nisi cœlestia cogitare consueverat; quod etiam retentus corpore, ipsa jam carnis claustra contemplatione transibat; quod mortem quoque quæ pæne cunctis pœna est, videlicet ut ingressum vitæ, et laboris sui præmium amabat."—Præfat. in Dial. Oper. iii. p. 233. compare Epict. i. 4 to 7.

his times, may be considered I. as a Christian bishop organising and completing the ritual and offices of the Church; as administrator of the patri- Threefold character of Gregory. mony of the Roman See, and its distribution to its various pious uses. II. As the patriarch of the West, exercising authority over the clergy and the churches in Italy, in Gaul, and other parts of Europe; as the converter of the Lombards from Arianism, and of the Saxons of Britain from heathenism; in his conduct to pagans, Jews, and heretics; and as maintaining the independence of the Western ecclesiastical power against the East. III. As virtual sovereign of Rome, an authority which he was almost compelled to assume; as guardian of the city, and the protector of the Roman population in Italy against the Lombards; and in his conduct to the Emperor Maurice, and to the usurper Phocas.

I. Under Gregory the ritual of the Church assumed more perfect form and magnificence. The Roman ordinal, though it may have received Services of the Church. additions from later pontiffs, in its groundwork and distribution belongs to Gregory. The organisation of the Roman clergy had probably been long complete; it comprehended the whole city and suburbs. The fourteen regions were divided into seven ecclesiastical districts. Thirty *titles* (corresponding with parishes) were superintended by sixty-six priests; the chief in each title was the cardinal priest. Each ecclesiastical district had its hospital or office for alms, over which a deacon presided; one of the seven was the archdeacon. Besides these, each hospital had an administrator, often a layman, to keep the accounts. The clergy of the seven regions officiated on ordinary occasions, each on one day of the week. Gregory appointed the *stations*, the

churches in which were to be celebrated the more solemn services during Lent and at the four great festivals. On these high days the Pope proceeded in state, usually on horseback, escorted by the deacons and other officers, from his palace in the Lateran to St. Peter's, S. Maria Maggiore, or some other of the great churches. He was received with obsequious ceremony, robed by the archdeacons, conducted to the choir with the incense and the seven candlesticks borne before him. Psalms were sung as he proceeded to his throne behind the altar. The more solemn portions of the service were of course reserved for the Supreme Pontiff.^b But Gregory did not stand aloof in his haughty sanctity, or decline to exercise more immediate influence over the minds of the people. He constantly ascended the pulpit himself, and in those days of fear and disaster was ever preaching in language no doubt admirably adapted to their state of mind, tracing to their sins the visible judgements of God, exhorting them to profound humiliation, and impressing them with what appears to have been his own conviction—that these multiplying calamities were the harbingers of the Last Day.

The music, the animating soul of the whole ritual, was under the especial care of Gregory. He introduced a new mode of chanting, which still bears his name, somewhat richer than that of Ambrose at Milan, but still not departing from solemn simplicity. He formed schools of singers, which he condescended himself to instruct; and from Rome the science was

^b The reader who may not be inclined to consult Gregory's own *Sacramentarium* and *Antiphonarium*, or the learned labours of Mabillon on the

Ordo Romanus, will find a good popular view of the Roman service in Fleury H. E. xxxvi. 16 *et seqq.*

propagated throughout the West: it was employed even to soothe and awe the barbarians of Britain. Augustine, the missionary, was accompanied by a school of choristers, educated in their art at Rome.^c

As administrator of the Papal patrimony Gregory was active and vigilant, unimpeachably just and humane. The Churches,^d especially that of Rome, now possessed very large estates, chiefly in Calabria, in Sicily;^e in the neighbourhood of Rome, in Apulia, Campania, Liguria; in Sardinia and Corsica; in the Cozian Alps; in Dalmatia and Illyricum; in Gaul; and even in Africa, and the East.^f There are letters addressed to the administrators of the Papal estates in all these territories; and in some cities, as Otranto, Gallipoli, perhaps Norcia, Nepi, Cuma, Capua, Corsealano; even in Naples, Palermo, Syracuse. Gregory prescribes minute regulations for these lands, throughout which prevails a solicitude lest the peasants should be exposed to the oppressions of the farmer or of the Papal officer. He enters into all the small vexatious exactions to which they were liable, fixes the precise amount of their payments, orders all unfair weights and

Gregory as
administrator
of the Sec.

^c The original copy of Gregory's Antiphony, the couch on which he reclined while he instructed the singers, and the rod with which he threatened the boys, were preserved, according to John the Deacon, down to his time.—Vit. Greg. M. ii. 6.

^d These estates were called the patrimony of the patron saints of the city, in Rome of St. Peter, in Milan of St. Ambrose, in Ravenna of St. Apollinaris. Ravenna and Milan had patrimonies in Sicily.

^e See some good and striking re-

marks on Gregory's conduct, policy, and relations to Sicily in Amari, Storia dei Musulmanni in Sicilia, l. i. c. 2. Also on his treatment of his slaves whom he retained in servitude, pp. 203-4.

^f Pope Celestine, writing, in the year 432, to the Emperor of the East, mentions "possessiones in Asiâ constitutas quas illustris et sanctæ recordationis Proba longâ a majoribus vetustate reliquerat Romanæ ecclesiæ." He prays the emperor that they may not be disturbed.

measures to be broker and new ones provided; he directs that his regulations be read to the peasants themselves; and, lest the old abuses should be revived after his death, they were to be furnished with legal forms of security against such suppressed grievances.^g Gregory lowered the seignorial fees on the marriages of peasants not free. Nor, in the protection of the poor peasant, did he neglect the rights and interests of the farmers; he secured to their relatives the succession to their contracts, and guarded the interests of their families by several just regulations. His maxim was, that the revenue of the Church must not be defiled by sordid gains.^h

The revenue thus obtained with the least possible intentional oppression of the peasant and the farmer was distributed with the utmost publicity, and with rigid regard for the interests of the diocese.ⁱ Rome, which had long ceased to receive the tributary harvests of Africa and of Egypt, depended greatly on the bounty of the Pope. Sicily alone had escaped the ravages of war, and from her corn-fields, chiefly from the Papal estates, came the regular supplies which fed the diminishing, yet still vast, poor population.^k In a synod

^g *Securitatis libellos*. The whole of this letter (i. 42) should be read to estimate the character of Gregory as a landlord. The peasants were greatly embarrassed by the payment of the first term of their rent, which being due before they could sell their crops, forced them to borrow at very high interest. Gregory directed that they should receive an advance from the church treasury, and be allowed to pay by instalments.

gory represses the covetousness of the clergy, who were not scrupulous in obtaining property for the church by unjust means.—*Epist.* vii. 23, 43. Bequests to monasteries continually occur.

ⁱ The quadripartite division, to the bishop, the clergy, the fabric and services of the church, and the poor, generally prevailed in the West.—*Epist.* v. 12.

^k Sicily, since its conquest, had paid as tribute a tenth of its corn to the

^h In more than one instance Gre-

at Rome it was enacted that the Pope should only be attended by ecclesiastics, who ought to enjoy the advantage of the example of his life, to the privacy of which the profane laity should not be admitted.^m

The shares of the clergy and of the papal officers, of the churches and monasteries, the hospitals, deaconries or ecclesiastical boards for the poor, were calculated in money, and distributed at four seasons of the year, at Easter, on St. Peter's day, St. Andrew's day, and that of the consecration of Gregory. The first day in every month he distributed to the poor in kind, corn, wine, cheese, vegetables, bacon, meat, fish, and oil.ⁿ The sick and infirm were superintended by persons appointed to inspect every street. Before the Pope sat down to his own meal a portion was separated and sent out to the hungry at his door. A great volume, containing the names, the ages, and the dwellings of the objects of papal bounty, was long preserved in the Lateran with reverential gratitude. What noble names may have lurked in that obscure list! The descendants of Consuls and Dictators, of the Flamens and the Augurs of elder Rome, may have received the alms of the Christian prelate, and partaken in the dole which their ancestors distributed to their thousand clients. So severe was the charity of Gregory that one day, on account of the death of an unrelieved beggar, he condemned himself to a hard penance for his guilt of neglect as steward of the Divine Bounty.^o

metropolis; the papal patrimony was liable to this burthen. But in case of shipwreck the farmers or peasants were obliged to make good the loss. Gregory relieves his tenants from this iniquitous burthen.

^m Epist. iv. 44.

ⁿ Among the instances of munificent

grants by Gregory, see that of *Aquæ Salvæ*, with its farms and vineyards, two gardens on the banks of the Tiber, and other lands, part of the patrimony of St. Peter, to the church of St. Paul, to maintain the lights.—xiv. 14.

^o It would be curious to obtain even an approximation to the value of the

Nor was Gregory's active beneficence confined to the city of Rome. His letters are full of paternal interposi-

patrimony of St. Peter at these times. These facts may be collected from the letters. The patrimony in Gaul was comparatively small: it is repeatedly called (Epist. iv. 14, vi. 6) *patrimonium*. At one time the Pope received 400 solidi in money, it does not appear clearly whether the residue of the annual rent. But the patrimony in Gaul seems to have been chiefly transmitted, or expended (there were no bills of exchange) in coarse cloths of Gallic manufacture for the poor. Besides this, Gregory ordered the purchase of English youths, of 17 or 18, to be bred in monasteries for missionary purposes.—vi. 33. These 400 solidi (putting the ordinary current solidus at from 11s. to 12s.—the Gallic solidus was one-third less, say 7s. 6d.) would not be above 160*l*. In one case the Gallic bishops seem to have withheld part of the patrimony—in Gregory's eyes a great offence. "*Valde est execrabile, ut quod a regibus gentium servatum est, ab episcopis dicatur ablatum.*"—vi. 53, 4. But in Sicily Gregory orders Peter the subdeacon, his faithful administrator, to invest 280 pounds of gold in his hands in corn. Taking the pound of gold at 40*l*. (see Gibbon on Greaves, ch. xvii.; Epist. vi. 35, note), this would amount to 2000*l*.; if the value of money was one and a half more than now, 5000*l*. But the produce of Sicily cannot be estimated at the money-rent. It had great quantities of cattle, especially horses (to the improvement of which Gregory paid great attention) in the plains about Palermo and Syracuse.

One mass or farm had been compelled by a dishonest factor to pay double rent to the amount of 507 aurei, nearly 280*l*. Gregory ordered it to be restored out of the property of the factor. The number of farms cannot be known, but suppose 100, and this an average rent. Rather more than a century later, the Emperor Leo the Isaurian confiscated to the public treasury the rights of the Roman See in Sicily, valued at three talents and a half.—Theophanes, Chron. p. 631, edit. Bonn. This passage, which at first sight promises the most full and accurate information, unfortunately offers almost insuperable difficulties. In the first place, the reading is not quite certain; nor is it absolutely clear whether it means some charge on the revenue of the island, or the full rents and profits of the patrimony of St. Peter. But the chief perplexity arises from our utter ignorance of what is meant by a talent. The loss inflicted on the hostile see of Rome must no doubt have been considerable; otherwise the emperor would not have inflicted it on him whom he considered a refractory subject; nor would it have commanded the notice of the historian. But any known talent, above all the small gold talent of Sicily, would give but an insignificant sum, under 900*l*. It had occurred to me, and has been suggested by a high authority, that it may mean 3½ talents in weight, paid in gold money. Fines in the Theodosian code are fixed at so many pounds of gold. 1½ cwt. or gold (if Gibbon be about right, accord

tions in favour of injured widows and orphans. It was even superior to some of the strongest prejudices of the time. Gregory sanctioned that great triumph of the spirit over the form of religion, by authorising not merely the alienation of the wealth of the clergy, but even the sale of the consecrated vessels from the altar for the redemption of captives—those captives not always ecclesiastics, but laymen.^p

II. Gregory did not forget the Patriarch of the West in the Bishop of Rome. Many churches in Italy were without pastors: their priests had been sold into slavery.^q He refused to intermeddle in the election of bishops,^r but his severe discipline did not scruple to degrade unworthy dignitaries and even prelates. Laurence, the first of the seven deacons, was deposed for his pride and other unnamed vices;^s the Bishop of Naples for crimes capital both by the laws of

ing to Greaves, in taking the pound of gold at 40*l.*) would give a large, perhaps not an improbable, sum: * and, if the relative value of money be taken into account, must have been a most serious blow to the papal revenue.

^p Gregory's humility is amusingly illustrated by his complaint, that of all his valuable stud in Sicily, his sub-deacon had only sent him a sorry nag, and five fine asses. The horse he could not mount because it was so wretched a one, the asses because they

were asses. "*Præterea unum nobis caballum miserum, et quinque bonos asinos transmisisti; caballum istum sedere non possum quia miser est, illos autem bonos sedere non possum quia asini sunt.*"—ii. 32.

^q Epist. i. 8, 15. There is an instance of a clericus sold for 12 solidi, at which price he might be redeemed. Gregory directs the Bishop of Sipontum to take that sum, if it cannot be obtained elsewhere, from the captive's church.—iii. 17.

^r Epist. ii. 29. ^s Epist. ii. in Præf.

* Compare, however, Paolo Sarpi, who, probably taking the ordinary talent, makes a much lower estimate (*delle Mat. Benefic. c. ix.*); but where did he find three talents of silver, half a one of gold, directly contrary to the text in Theophanes, and to the translation of Anastasius? Much of this has been worked out, but far too positively, by the writer of a modern book for popular use, and therefore with no citation of authorities.—Bianchi-Giovini, *Storia del Pap. Capolago*, 1851, t. iii. pp. 159-160.

God and man.^t The Bishop of Salona is reproved for neglect of his solemn duties, and indulgence in convivial pleasures; for his contumacy in refusing to reinstate his archdeacon, he is deprived of his pallium; if he continues contumacious, he is to be excluded from communion. The Pope reproves the Bishop of Sipontum, in more than one angry letter, for his criminal and irreligious remissness in allowing the daughter of a man of rank to throw off her religious habit and return to a secular life.^u He commands the bishop to arrest the woman who has thus defiled herself, and imprison her in a monastery till further instructions.^x He commands Andrew Bishop of Tarentum, if guilty of concubinage, to abdicate his see; if of cruelty to a female, to be suspended from his functions for two months.^y To Januarius, the Bishop of Cagliari, he speaks in still more menacing terms for a far more heinous offence—ploughing up the harvest of a proprietor on a Sunday before mass, and removing the landmark after mass. Nothing but the extreme age of Januarius saved him from the utmost ecclesiastical punishment.^z He gave a commission to four bishops to degrade the Bishop of Melita for some serious crime: certain presbyters, his accomplices, were, it seems, to be imprisoned in monasteries.^a We find the Bishop of Rome exercising authority in Greece over the Bishops of Thebes^b and Larissa and Corinth.^c The Bishops of Istria were less submissive.

^t Epist. ii.; the ordo and plebs were to elect his successor.

^u Epist. ii. 18.

^x Epist. iii. 43. ^y iii. 45.

^z This seems to be the sense of the passage vii. ii. 1. which is obscure, probably corrupt. Januarius seems to

have given Gregory much trouble. Another epistle censures him for exacting exorbitant burial fees.—vii. ii. 56. Oblations for lights might be received for those buried in the church.

^a vii. ii. 63.

^b Epist. iii. 6, 7.

^c iv. 51.

His attempts, at the commencement of his pontificate, to force them to condemn the three Chapters, were repressed by the direct interference of the Emperor.

In Gaul, simony and the promotion of young or unworthy persons to ecclesiastical dignities constantly demanded the interference of the Pontiff. The greater the wealth and honours attached to the sacred office, and the greater their influence over the barbarian mind, the more they were coveted for themselves, and sought by all the unscrupulous means of worldly ambition.^d The epistles of Gregory to the bishops, to Queen Brunehild, to Thierry and Theodobert, and to Chlotair kings in Gaul, are full of remonstrances against these irregularities.^e

Of all the great events of his pontificate, Gregory looked on none with more satisfaction than the conversion of the Arian-Gothic kingdom of Spain to Catholicism. He compares, in his humility, the few who in the last day will bear witness to his own zeal and influence, to the countless multitudes who would owe their salvation to the orthodox example of King Recared.^f

The Council of Toledo, at which Spain publicly proclaimed its Catholicity, closes the history of the old Teutonic Arianism. The Lombards, indeed, May 8, 589. remained to be subdued by the mild and Christian wisdom of Gregory; but in Burgundy and in Visigothic Gaul, the zeal and organisation of the Catholic clergy, and the terror, the power, the intrigues of the orthodox

^d iv. 54.

^e ix. 50 to 57. The privilegium said to have been granted by Gregory to the monastery of St. Medardus, anathematising kings and all secular persons who should infringe the de-

crees of his apostolic authority, and ranking them with Judas, is proved to be spurious by Launoï, and by Dupin.—Dissert. 7, de Antiq. Eccl. Discip.

^f Epist. ad Rechared. Reg. vii. 128.

Franks, had driven it from the minds of the kings, and from the hearts of the people. Twice Arianism had assailed the independence of Burgundy; twice it fell before the victorious arms of the Franks, the prayers, and no doubt more powerful aid than prayers of the Catholic hierarchy. The Council of Epaona (though Arianism rallied for the last desperate conflict under the younger Godemar after that Council) witnessed what might be considered the act of submission to Latin Christianity.

Fall of Arian-
ism in Gaul.
A.D. 517.

The history of Visigothic Arianism in Spain is a more dire and awful tragedy. During the early reigns, both of the Suevian and Visigothic kings, the Catholic bishops had held their councils undisturbed; Arianism had maintained its lofty or prudent or indifferent toleration. Leovigild ascended the throne, the ablest, most ambitious monarch who had sat on an Arian-Gothic throne, except Theodoric the Ostrogoth. Leovigild aspired to subdue the lawless Gothic lords who dwelt apart in their embattled mountain fastnesses, to compel the whole land (where each race, each rank, each creed asserted its wild freedom) to order and to law. He would be a king. He carried out his schemes with rigour and success. But he would compel religious differences also to unity. Himself a stern Arian, he even condescended to approximate, and with consummate art, to Catholicism; he sought by confounding to harmonise the contending parties; but he could not deceive the quick sight of the more vigilant, more intellectual Catholic hierarchy.

In Spain.

572 to 586.

His young son, Hermenegild, became a Catholic—the Catholic a rebel. Seville and the southern cities rose against the King; Hermenegild was besieged in Seville; the Guadalquivir was blocked up; the city suffered the

extremity of famine. Hermenegild fled to Cordova: he was sold by the Greeks, who possessed some of the havens under allegiance to the Byzantine Emperor. He was imprisoned first, less rigorously, in pleasant Valencia; afterwards more harshly in Tarragona. He was shut up in a noisome dungeon, with manacles on his hands. The young martyr (he was but twenty-one years old) increased his own sufferings by the sackcloth which chafed his soft and delicate limbs. He resisted all the persuasions, all the arts of his father. A fierce Goth, Sisebert, was sent into his cell, and clove his skull with an axe. The rebellious but orthodox Hermenegild, about ten centuries after, was canonised by Pope Sixtus V., through the influence of Philip II., the father of the murdered Don Carlos.^s

Leovigild, before his death, was compelled at least to adopt milder measures towards his Catholic subjects. He is even said to have renounced his Arianism.

The first act of his son Recared was to avenge his brother's death on the murderer Sisebert. He hardly condescended to disguise, even for a year, his Catholicism; yet Recared was obliged to proceed with caution and reserve. It was not till the year before Gregory ascended the pontifical throne that Spain declared her return to Roman unity.^h

In Africa Gregory endeavoured to suppress the undying remains of the Donatist factions, which even now

^s The religion was not an affair of race: Massona, the Catholic Bishop of Merida, was a Goth. Leovigild set up Sanna as a rival bishop of Merida. Leovigild threatened the holy Massona with exile. "If you know where God is not, command your servants to conduct me thither." A thunder-clap

pealed in the heavens. "That is the King of whom we and you should stand in awe. He is not a king like you."—Florez, *España Sagrada*.

^h Gregory of Tours and John of Bisclar are the great authorities for this period of Spanish history.

aspired to the primacy of the Numidian Churches; but Donatism expired only with the Christianity of Northern Africa.

Africa.

By Gregory Britain was again brought within the pale of Christian Europe. The visions of his own early spiritual ambition were fulfilled by his missionary, the monk Augustine. In a letter to the Bishop of Alexandria he relates with triumph the tidings of this conquest, as communicated by Augustine, who boasts already of ten thousand baptised converts.ⁱ But in the conversion of the heathen Gregory was neither a fierce nor intolerant iconoclast. He deprecated the destruction of the pagan temples; he enjoined their sanctification by Christian rites;^k the idols only were to be destroyed without remorse. Even the sacrifices of oxen^m were to continue, but to be celebrated on the saints' days, in order gently to transfer the adoration of the people from their old to their new objects of worship. In his letters to the King and Queen, Ethelred and Bertha, he is gentle, persuasive, but he intimates the rapidly approaching end of the world in those awful terms which might appal the mind of a barbarian.ⁿ Even Ireland was not beyond the sphere of Gregory's patriarchal vigilance. He was consulted by certain bishops of that island on the question of rebaptising heretics. He thought it necessary to inform those

ⁱ vii. 31.

^k We find a singular illustration of the commercial intercourse kept up by means of religion: timber was to be brought from Britain to build the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome; and in several letters to the Bishop of Alexandria, Gregory informs him that he has sent him timber, an

acceptable present in Egypt.

^m It is curious to find the theory of the Egyptian origin of many of the Hebrew rites, received with so much apprehension in the writings of Spencer and Warburton, unsuspectingly promulgated by Gregory.—Epist. ix.

ⁿ 71

^o x. 60.

remote prelates, who perhaps were utterly ignorant of the controversy, as to his views on the three Chapters. The Irish bishops contrast their own state of peace with the calamities of Italy, and seem disposed to draw the inference that God approved their views on the contested points rather than those of the Italian prelates. Gregory replies that the miseries of Italy were rather signs of God's chastening love. The unconvinced Irish, however, adhered to their own opinions.^o

But if to these remote and yet unsubdued regions Gregory showed this wise forbearance, his solicitude to extirpate the last vestiges of heathenism which still lingered in Sardinia,^p and a few other barbarous parts, was more uncompromising and severe. Towards those obstinate heathens he forgot on one occasion his milder language. He instructs the Bishop of Cagliari to preach to them. If his preaching is without effect, to compel them to repentance by imprisonment and other rigorous measures.^q

Everywhere throughout the spiritual dominions of Gregory—in Gaul, in Italy, in Sicily, in Spain —the Jews dwelt mingled with his Christian Gregory and the Jews. subjects. To them Gregory was on the whole just and humane.^r He censured the Bishop of Terracina for unjustly expelling the Jews from some place where

^o Letter of Columbanus published by Usher. — Biblioth. Vet. Patr. Lugd.

^p Epist. iii. 23, 26; vii. 1, 2; compare 30.

^q "Siquidem servi sunt, verberibus, cruciatibusque, quibus ad emendationem pervenire valeant, castigare. Si vero sunt liberi, inclusione dignâ distinctâque sunt in penitentiam duri-

gendi; ut qui salubria et a mortis periculo revocantia audire contemnunt, cruciatus (ibus, qu. ?) saltem eos corporis ad desiderandam mentis valeas reducere sanitatem."—vii. ii. 67.

^r "Eos enim qui a religione Christianâ discordant, mansuetudine, benignitate, admonendo, suadendo, ad unitatem fidei necesse est congregare." —Epist. i. 33.

they had been accustomed to celebrate their festivals. He condemned the forcible baptism of Jews in Gaul, which had been complained of by certain itinerant Jewish merchants.^s Conviction by preaching was the only legitimate means of conversion. He did not scruple, however, to try the milder method of bribery. Certain Jewish tenants of Church property are told that if they embrace Christianity their rents will be lowered.^t Even if their conversion be not sincere, that of their children may be so.^u He denied them, however, the possession of Christian slaves, though where the slaves belonged as coloni to their estates (the Jews appear here, as in Sicily, in the unusual condition of landowners and cultivators of the soil), they were to maintain their uninvaded rights.^x Slaves of Jewish masters, who, whether pagans or Jews, had taken refuge in a church from the desire of embracing Christianity, were to be purchased from their owners.^y Gregory endeavoured to check the European slave-trade, which was chiefly in the hands of the Jews, but his efforts were by no means successful.^z Gregory reproved the Bishop of Cagliari, who had permitted a Jewish convert

^s Epistle to the bishops of Arles and Marseilles, i. 45.

^t iv. 6. This is remarkable as showing the Jews in the rare situation not only of cultivators of the soil, but as cultivators of church lands. In another passage he is extremely indignant at the sale of church vessels to a Jew, who was to be compelled to restore them.—i. 51.

^u ii. 37. See the curious story of a Jew who had deceived the Christians by setting up an altar to St. Elias, at which they were tempted to worship. (He must have been a singularly here-

tical Jew.) He was to be punished for the offence.

^x Epistle to the Bishop of Luna. To Queen Brunehild Gregory expresses his wonder that in her dominions Jews were permitted to possess Christian slaves.—vii. ii. 115, 116.

^y v. 31. In the next epistle Gregory expresses his indignation that certain Samaritans in Catana had presumed to circumcise their slaves. Compare vii. 1, 2, and xi. 15.

^z vii. ii. 30: compare Hist. of Jews, iii. 51.

named Peter to seize the synagogue, and to set up within it a cross and an image of the Virgin. The Jews had been forbidden to build new synagogues, but were not to be deprived of those which they possessed. In one the images were to be removed with due respect, and the building restored to its rightful owners.^a Directions in a similar spirit were given to the Bishop of Palermo.

Gregory's humanity was hardly tried by the temptation of persecuting heretics. He was happily wanting both in power and in opportunity. Gregory and the heretics. The heresies of the East, excepting as to the three Chapters, had almost died away in the West. The Pelagian controversy had almost argued itself to rest; and even Manicheism, which was later to spring up in new forms, lurked only in obscure places, undetected by the searching jealousy of orthodoxy. Arianism in Spain had recanted its errors; among the Lombards it was an armed antagonist which could only be assailed, as it was victoriously assailed, by the gentle means of persuasion and love.

While Gregory was thus, by his Christian virtues, establishing a substantial claim to Christian supremacy, and by superstitions congenial to the age still further unconsciously confirming his authority over the mind of man, he heard with astonishment and indignation that John the Patriarch of Constantinople had publicly, openly, assumed the title of Universal Bishop, a title which implied his absolute supremacy over the Christian world.^b This claim

Bishop of Constantinople Universal Bishop.

^a vii. ii. 59 : compare xi. 15.

^b Cardinal Mai quotes a curious passage from a MS. Synodicon, in which the Primacy of Rome is attri-

buted to her being the centre of all affairs, civil and ecclesiastical : *πρότερον ἐν τῇ πρεσβυτέρᾳ Πόλει συν-ἔρρεον τὰ πράγματα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο*

rested on the civil supremacy of Constantinople. The Western empire had perished, Italy had sunk into a province, Rome into a provincial city. Constantinople was the seat of empire, the capital of the world; the bishop of the capital was of right the chief pontiff of Christendom. The pretensions of the successors of St. Peter were thus contemptuously set aside; the religious supremacy became a kind of appanage to the civil sovereignty; it lost at once its permanence, its stability, its independence; it might fluctuate with all the vicissitudes of political dominion, or the caprice of human despotism.^c

The letter of Gregory to the Emperor Maurice pours forth his indignation with the utmost vehemence, yet not without skill. All the calamities of the empire are traced to the pride and ambition of the clergy, yet there is a prudent reservation for the awfulness of their power, if applied, as it ought to be, as mediators between earth and heaven. "What fleshly arm would presume to lift itself against the imperial majesty, if the clergy were unanimous in ensuring, by their prayers and by

συνέτρεχον πάντες ἐκεῖ . . . ἐν-
τεῦθεν γὰρ καὶ τὸ τῆς προεδρίας
πρεσβείων τῷ Ῥώμῃς θρόνῳ κ.τ.λ.
Deinde prosequitur auctor synodici,
more solito schismaticorum græco-
rum dicens, ea privilegia Romanæ sedi
obvenisse a sede imperii : quâ deinde
Constantinopolim translâtâ, negoti-
orum universitatem devolutam esse ad
episcopum Byzantinum, excepto tan-
tum primatu. καὶ τῷ Ῥώμῃς τὸ
μὲν τῆς προεδρίας τίμιον εἰς ἔτι
σάζεται. ἡ δ' ἄλλη τῆς διοικήσεως
αἰσχρονομία, καὶ τῷ κράτει
λαμπρυνόμενῃ τῆς βασιλικῆς αὐθεν-
τίας. — Spicilegium Romanum, vii.

Præfatio, p. xxvi.

^c From the jealous and even angry tone in which Gregory writes to John Archbishop of Ravenna, who had dared to wear the pallium out of the church, and had ventured on other irregularities, at the same time that he protests that he always renders due honour to the church of Ravenna, it may be suspected that, as the residence of the Exarch, the emperor's representative, Ravenna was beginning to aspire towards some peculiar ecclesiastical superiority, at least to independence. — Epist. iv. ii. 15.

their merits, the protection of the Redeemer? Were the clergy what they should be, the fiercest barbarians would cease to rage against the lives of the innocent." "And is this a time, chosen by an arbitrary prelate, to invade the undoubted rights of St. Peter by a haughty and pompous title? Every part of Europe is abandoned to the dominion of the barbarians; cities are destroyed, fortresses overthrown, provinces depopulated, lands without inhabitants, the worshippers of idols are daily reveling in the massacre of the faithful, and the priests, who ought to be wailing in dust and ashes, are inventing new and profane appellations to gratify their pride. Am I defending my own cause? Is this any special injury to the Bishop of Rome? It is the cause of God, the cause of the whole Church. And who is he that usurps this uncanonical dignity?—the prelate of a see repeatedly ruled by heretics, by Nestorians, by Macedonians. Let all Christian hearts reject the *blasphemous* name. It was once applied, by the Council of Chalcedon, in honour of St. Peter, to the Bishop of Rome; but the more humble pontiffs of Rome would not assume a title injurious to the rest of the priesthood. I am but the servant of those priests who live as becomes their order. But 'pride goeth before a fall;' and 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.'"^d

A.D. 595.

To the Empress (for on all religious questions the Empress is usually addressed as well as the Emperor), Gregory brands the presumption of John as a sign of the coming of Antichrist; and compares it to that of Satan, who aspired to be higher than all the angels."

^d Epist. Mauriti. Augusto. Epist. iv. 32.^e Ad Constant. Imperatric., Epist. iv. 33.

Among the exhortations to humility addressed to John himself, he urges this awful example:—"No one in the Church has yet sacrilegiously dared to usurp the name of Universal Bishop. Whoever calls himself Universal Bishop is Antichrist."¹ Gregory appeals also to the Bishops of Antioch and Alexandria to unite with him in asserting the superior dignity of St. Peter, in which they have a common interest; and it is remarkable with what address he endeavours to enlist those prelates in his cause, without distinctly admitting their equal claim to the inheritance of St. Peter, to which Antioch at least might adduce a plausible title.²

III. In the person of Gregory the Bishop of Rome first became, in act and in influence, if not in Gregory as temporal sovereign. avowed authority, a temporal sovereign. Nor were his acts the ambitious encroachments of ecclesiastical usurpation on the civil power. They were forced upon him by the purest motives, if not by absolute necessity. The virtual sovereignty fell to him as abdicated by the neglect or powerlessness of its rightful owners: he must assume it, or leave the city and the people to anarchy. He alone could protect Rome and the remnant of her citizens from barbaric servitude; his authority rested on the universal feeling of its beneficence; his title was the security afforded by his government.

Nothing could appear more forlorn and hopeless than the state of Rome on the accession of Gregory to the

¹ Joanni Constant. Epist. iv. 38.

² "Itaque cum multi sunt apostoli, pro ipso tamen principatu sola apostolorum principis sedes in auctoritate convaluit quæ in tribus locis unius est. . . . Cum ergo unius atque una sit

sedes, cui ex auctoritate divinâ tres nunc episcopi præsent, quicquid ego de vobis boni audio, hoc mihi imputo, quod de me boni creditis hoc vestris meritis imputate."—Epist. vi. 37.

pontificate—continual wars, repeated sieges, the capture and recapture of the city by barbarian Goths and Vandals, and no less barbarous Greeks.^h Fires, tempests, inundations had raged with indiscriminating fury. If the heathen buildings of the city had suffered most, it was because, from their magnitude and splendour, they were more exposed to plunder and devastation. The Christian city was indebted for its comparative security, if partially to its sanctity, in a great degree to its humility. Epidemic plagues, the offspring of these calamities, had been constantly completing the work of barbarian enemies and of the destructive elements.

After the pestilence which raged at the accession of Gregory had been arrested (an event attributed no doubt to the solemn religious ceremonies of the Bishop), his first care was that of a prefect of the city—to supply food for the famishing people. This, as has been shown, was chiefly furnished from Sicily and from the estates of the Church. During this whole period the city was saved from the horrors of famine only by the wise and provident regulations of the Pope.ⁱ

But it was the Lombard invasion which compelled the Pope to take a more active part in the affairs of Italy. For seven and twenty years, ^{The Lombards.} says Gregory, we have lived in this city in terror of the sword of the Lombards. If during the few later years of Gregory's pontificate of thirteen years Rome enjoyed a precarious peace, that peace it owed to the intervention of her Bishop.

^h Denina thinks that greater misery was inflicted upon Italy by the Grecian reconquest than by any other invasion.—*Revoluz. d'Italia*, t. i. l. v. p. 247.

ⁱ Gregory, in a letter to one of his agents in Sicily, writes thus:—"Quia si quid minus huc transmittetur, non unus quilibet homo, sed cunctus simul populus trucidatur."—*Epist.* i. 2.

In their first invasion of Italy, under Alboin,^k the Lombards extended their conquests as far as Tuscany and Umbria. Rome, Ravenna, and a few cities on the sea-coast, alone escaped their devastations, and remained under the jurisdiction of the Exarch of Ravenna, the representative of the Byzantine empire. The tragedy of Alboin's death, and that of his adulterous Queen, Rosmunda; the cup made out of her father's skull, with which Alboin pledged her in a public banquet, her revenge, her own murder by her guilty paramour, though in the latter event the Exarch of Ravenna had taken part, belong, nevertheless, to the unmitigated ferocity of the barbarian. The Lombard host comprehended wild hordes of Teutonic or Sclavonian tribes.^l They occupied all the cities of northern Italy, to which they gave the name of Lombardy; civilisation retreated as they advanced; the bishop, at their approach, fled from Milan. Nothing withheld them from the immediate and total subjugation of Italy but their wars with the Franks—wars excited by the intrigues of the Byzantine court, who by these means alone averted for a time the loss of their Italian territories.

After the short reign of Cleph, the elected successor of Alboin, the kingdom was divided into duke-
A.D. 573.
doms, and these martial independent princes continued to extend their ravages over the still retiring limits of the Roman dominion. They compelled the cultivators of the soil to pay a third part of their produce; they plundered churches and monasteries without

^k A.D. 567, twenty-three years before the Papedom of Gregory, A.D. 590.

^l "Unde usque hodie eorum in quibus habitant vicos, Gepidos, Bul-

gares, Sarmatas, Pannonios, Suavos, Noricos, sive aliis hujuscemodi nominibus appellamus."—Paul Diacon. de Gestis Longobard., ii. 26.

scruple; massacred the clergy, destroyed the cities, and mowed down the people like corn.^m

The perpetual wars with the Franks, who still poured over the Alps, demanded from the Lombards a firmer government. Autharis was raised by A.D. 581 acclamation to the Lombard throne. Within his own dominions the reign of Autharis was that of prosperity and peace. So only can any truth be assigned to the poetic description of his rule by the Latin historian the Deacon Paul, in whose glowing words the savage and desolating Lombards almost suddenly became an orderly, peaceful, Christian people. "Wonderful was the state of the Lombard kingdom: violence and treachery were alike unknown; no one oppressed, no one plundered another; thefts and robberies were unheard of; the traveller went wherever he would in perfect security."ⁿ How strange a contrast with the bitter and unceasing complaints in the works of Gregory of the savage manners, remorseless cruelties, and sacrilegious impieties, of these most wicked Lombards,^o these heathen or Arian enemies of Rome and of true religion! During a period of cessation in his wars with the Franks, King Autharis swept unresisted over the whole of Southern Italy. At Reggio, the extreme point, the conqueror rode his horse into the sea, and with his spear struck a column, which had been erected there, exclaiming, "This is the boundary of the Lombard kingdom." During this or former expeditions Lombard dukedoms had been founded in the south, of which the most formidable were those of Spoleto and Benevento. These half-independent chieftains waged war upon the

^m De Gestis Longobard., ii. 32

ⁿ Paul. Diac. iii. 16.

^o "Nefandissimos Lombardos" is Gregory's standing epithet.

Romans; the latter especially carried his ravages to the gates of Rome.

The Italians sent earnest supplications and the Pope pressing message after message for succour, to the successive Emperors, Tiberius and Maurice. The Byzantine government was too feeble, or too much occupied by nearer enemies, to render effectual aid to this remote province: their allies, the Franks, were the only safeguards of Italy.

It was towards the close of the reign of Autharis that Gregory became bishop of the plague-stricken city. In the second year of his pontificate, Agilulf became the husband of Theodelinda, the widow of Autharis, and King of the Lombards.^p The Exarch, who had not the power to avert, had the folly to provoke the Lombards to new invasions. He surprised Perugia and some other cities, and, to protect them, withdrew great part of the insufficient garrison of Rome. Agilulf poured his unresisted swarms into Southern Italy.^q

Already had Gregory made peace with one formidable enemy, Ariulf, the Duke of Spoleto.^r The predatory bands of the Lombard had threatened the city

^p Gregory ascribes the death of "Nefandissimus" Autharis to a direct judgement of God, for his prohibiting the baptism of Lombard children in the Catholic faith, "pro quâ culpâ eum divina majestas extinxit." Autharis was reported to have died by poison (Epist. i. 16, Nov.-Dec. 590)—probably an idle tale.—Paul. Diac. iii. 36.

^q "Non Romanorum," wrote Gregory, "sed Longobardorum episcopus factus sum."

^r Gregory's letter to the Archbishop of Ravenna shows how these affairs were thrown upon him. "Movere vos non debet Romani patricii animositas. Age cum eo ut pacem cum Ariulpho faciamus, quia miles de Româ ablatus est. Theodosiani vero, qui remanserunt, regem non accipientes vix ad murorum custodiam se accommodant, et destituta ab omnibus civitas, si pacem non habet, quomodo subsistat?"—Epist. ii. 32.

where the walls were scarcely manned by a diminished and unpaid garrison. Agilulf, with his army, appeared at the gates of Rome.³ Gregory suddenly brought to an end his exposition of the Temple of Ezekiel, on which he was preaching to the people. His work closes with these words:—"If I must now break off my discourse, ye are my witnesses for what reason, ye who share in my tribulations. On all sides we are girt with war; everywhere is the imminent peril of death. Some return to us with their hands chopped off, some are reported as captives, others as slain. I am constrained to cease from my exposition, for I am weary of life. Who can expect me now to devote myself to sacred eloquence, now that my harp is turned to mourning, and my speech to the voice of them that weep?"⁴

At least, by encouraging the commanders of the garrison, who seem to have done their duty, Gregory contributed to avert the impending Gregory defends Rome. capture of the city. While all the Romans, even those of the highest rank and family, without the city, were dragged like dogs into captivity,⁵ at least those within were in safety, and owed their safety to the Pope; and the pacific influence which Gregory obtained in this momentous crisis led, after some years, to a definitive treaty of peace.⁶

Yet while Gregory was thus exercising the real power, and performing the protecting part of a sovereign, the

³ Chronologists differ as to the date of this siege. Sigonius gives 594, Baronius 595. I should agree with Muratori for 592, or at latest 593. Jaffé dates it 592, July.—Epist. ii. 46.

⁴ Job xxx. 31, Exposit. in Ezekiel. ad fin.

⁵ It is not quite clear at what

period the noble Romans, whom Gregory was anxious to ransom from the nefandissimi Lombardi, were carried into captivity upon the taking of Corbana.—Epist. vi. 23.

⁶ Sigonius places the final peace in 599; so also Jaffé, March.—Epist. ix. 42.

Exarch, the feeble and insolent Romanus, affected to despise the weakness of Gregory, in supposing the barbarous Lombards disposed to peace.^y The Emperor Maurice, safe in his palace at Constantinople, looked with jealousy on the proceedings of Gregory, who thus presumed to save the narrow remnant of his dominions without his sanction, and disowned the peace, made, it should seem, by Gregory on his own authority.^z Gregory, indeed, according to his own statement, possessed greater powers than he displayed. The fate of the whole Lombard race depended on his will. On the occasion of a charge made against him, as having been accessory to the death of a bishop, he is not content with repelling the accusation as false and alien to his humane disposition, but he desires the Emperor to be reminded, that if he had been disposed to mingle himself up with the death of the Lombards, the nation would have been without king, duke, or count, and would have fallen into utter confusion. But the fear of God had forbidden him to be concerned in the death of any human being.^a It is difficult to reject this as an idle boast; more difficult to fix any period or to point to any juncture in which the Pope's humanity was exposed to this temptation.

^y According to Gregory, the oppressions of the Exarchs were even worse than the hostilities of the Lombards. "Quia ejus in nos militia gladios Longobardorum vicit: ita ut benigniores videantur hostes, qui nos interimunt, quam reipublicæ judices, qui nos malitiâ suâ, rapinis atque fallaciis in cogitatione consumunt."—*Epist. ad Sebast. Episc. vi. 42.*

^z *Epist. v. 40:* compare *v. 42.*

^a "Quod breviter suggeras domino

nostro, quia si ego servus eorum in morte Longobardorum miscere me voluissem, hodie Longobardorum gens nec Regem, nec Duces nec Comites haberet, atque in summâ confusione esset divisa."—*Epist. vii. 1, ad Sabin.* quoted also in *Paul. Diacon.* This seems to point at some conspiracy devised to massacre the Lombard chiefs. It cannot mean any fanatic confidence in his own prayers, as of power to pluck down divine vengeance upon them.

But it is most singular that the influence of Gregory was obtained by means not only more mild and legitimate, but purely religious. In his very hour of conquest he was subduing the conqueror. While the Lombard king was at the gates of Rome, at the head of a hostile and ferocious army, Gregory was pursuing the triumphs of the Catholic faith, entertaining a friendly correspondence with the orthodox Queen Theodelinda, and beginning, at least, to wean the sovereign and his subjects from what he thought, doubtless, the worst part of their character, their Arianism. Theodelinda was a Bavarian princess, bred up in Trinitarian belief, and to her Gregory appeals to show her genuine Christianity by her love of peace. Great would be her reward if she should check the prodigal effusion of blood. To Theodelinda Gregory addressed his memorable Dialogues; and perhaps the best excuse which can be made for the wild and extravagant legends thus stamped with his authority, and related apparently with such undoubting faith, may be found in the person to whom he dedicated this work. They might be, if not highly coloured, selected with less scruple in order to impress the Lombard queen with the wonder-working power of the Roman clergy, of the orthodox monks and bishops of Italy. Profound as was the superstition of Gregory, many of these stories need some such palliation.^b

Gregory employed the influence which he had obtained over Queen Theodelinda not merely to secure for Rome the blessings of peace; through him likewise, according

^a Some writers have endeavoured to relieve the memory of Gregory the Great from the authorship of the Dialogues. But there can be no reasonable doubt of their authenticity; they are entirely in his style and manner, and alluded to more than once in his unquestioned writings.

to the annalist of the Lombards, from heathens, or, at most Arians, who paid no regard to the sacred possessions, the edifices, or the ministers of the Church, the whole nation, with Agilulf, their king, became orthodox Christians. Agilulf restored the wealth which he had plundered from the churches, reinstated the ejected bishops, and raised those who had remained in their sees from abject poverty and degradation to dignity and power.^c At what period this conversion took place it is difficult to decide; throughout Gregory's writings the Lombards are mentioned with unmitigated abhorrence; it could only, therefore, be towards the close of his life that this important event can be thought possible.

Still, however, Gregory acknowledged himself a subject of the Emperor. Though constrained to negotiate a separate peace, this measure was submissively excused as compelled by hard necessity. Even in his strongest act of opposition to the Byzantine court, in which the civil power of the Emperor and the monastic spirit of the Pope seemed to meet in irreconcilable hostility, his resistance to the law which prohibited soldiers actually enrolled or enlisted by a mark on the hand from deserting their duty to their country and taking refuge in monasteries, Gregory did not dare to resist the publication of the edict.^d His language is that of supplication rather than remonstrance; the humble expostulation of a subject, not the bold assertion of spiritual power. "I confess, my Sovereigns, that I am struck with terror at this edict, by which heaven is closed against so many; and that which before was lawful to all, is prohibited to some.

Imperial law
about monas-
tics.

^c Paul. Diac. iv. 6.

^d This edict dates 593 Gregory's letter, Aug. 593.—Jaffé.

Many, indeed, may lead a religious life in a secular habit, but the most of men cannot be saved before God but by leaving all they have. What am I, who thus address my Sovereigns? Dust, and a worm! But I cannot be silent before my Sovereigns, because this edict is directed against God, the author of all things. Power was given to my Sovereigns over all men, to assist the good, to open wide the way to heaven; and that the kingdom of earth might be subservient to the kingdom of heaven. And now, behold, it is proclaimed that no one who is marked as an earthly soldier, unless he has completed his service, or is discharged from infirmity, shall be allowed to be a soldier of Jesus Christ. To this Christ answers, by me, the lowliest of his servants and yours: 'From a notary I made you captain of the guards; from captain of the guards, Cæsar; from Cæsar, Emperor; and, more than that, the father of Emperors. I commended my priests to your care, and you withdraw your soldiers from my service. Tell your servant what answer you will make to the Lord when he comes to judgement. It is supposed, perhaps, that such conversions are not sincere; but I, your unworthy servant, know many converted soldiers who in our own days have worked miracles and done many signs and wonders. And will you prohibit the conversion of such men by law? Inquire what Emperor it was that first issued such a statute.* Consider, seriously, is this the time to prohibit men from leaving the world, when the end of the world is at hand? But a short time, and the earth and the heavens will burn,

* The allusion is to Julian the Apostate—See Epist. 65. In the same letter Gregory asserts the temporal dominion of the sovereign in still

stronger terms. "Qui dominari eum non solum militibus, sed etiam sacerdotibus concessit."

and among the blazing elements, amid angels and archangels, and thrones and dominions, and principalities and powers, the terrible Judge will appear. And what, if all your sins be remitted and this law rise up against you, will be your excuse? By that terrible Judge I beseech you, let not so many tears, so many prayers, and alms, and fastings be obscured before the sight of God. Either mitigate or alter this law. The armies of my Sovereigns will be strengthened against their enemies in proportion as the armies of God, whose warfare is by prayer, are increased. I, who am subject to your authority, have commanded the law to be transmitted throughout the empire, but I have also avowed to my Sovereigns that I esteem it displeasing to God. I have done my duty in both cases; I have obeyed the Emperor, and not compromised my reverence for God.”^r

The darkest stain on the name of Gregory is his cruel
Usurpation of Phocas. and unchristian triumph in the fall of the Emperor Maurice—his base and adulatory praise of Phocas, the most odious and sanguinary tyrant who had ever seized the throne of Constantinople. It is the worst homage to religion to vindicate or even to excuse the crimes of religious men; and the apologetic palliation, or even the extenuation of their misdeeds rarely succeeds in removing, often strengthens, the unfavourable impression.

The conduct of the Emperor Maurice to Gregory had nothing of that vigour or generosity which had commended him to his Eastern subjects, while the avarice which had estranged their affections contributed manifestly towards the abandonment of Italy to the Lombard

invader. Gregory owed not his elevation to Maurice. The cold consent of the Byzantine Emperor had ratified his election, and from that time the Emperor had treated him with neglect and contempt. On one occasion Maurice had called him in plain terms a fool for allowing himself to be imposed upon by the craft of the Lombard Ariulf. "A fool indeed I am," replied Gregory, "to suffer, as I do, among the swords of the Lombards."^a Throughout his reign Maurice had impotently resented the enforced interference of Gregory in temporal affairs. He had thwarted and repudiated his negotiations, by which Rome was saved. The only act of vigour by which the Emperor had attempted to recruit his Italian armies had been that which Gregory in his monastic severity had denounced as a flagrant impiety. Maurice had, at least, connived at the arrogant usurpation of the title of Universal Bishop by the patriarch of Constantinople, even if he had not deliberately sanctioned it.^b

Could it be expected that Gregory should rise superior to all these causes of animosity; that he should altogether suppress or disguise what might appear his patriotic and religious hopes from a change of dynasty? Such revolutions were of so frequent occurrence on the throne of Byzantium as to awaken little surprise and less sympathy, in the remote provinces; and the allegiance of Italy was but of recent date—an allegiance which subjected the land to all the tyranny and oppression,

^a Epist. iv. 31. The craft which has been imputed to Gregory may perhaps be traced in this remarkable letter. He acknowledges himself and the priesthood in general's subject to the censure of the emperor. "Sed excellenti consideratione propter eum cujus servi sunt, eis ita dominetur, ut etiam

debitam reverentiam impendat. Nam in divinis eloquiis sacerdotes aliquando dii, aliquando angeli vocantur."

^b Maurice, according to the biographer of Gregory, had meditated more violent hostility against the Pope, but had been deterred by the alarming prophecy of a monk.—Vit. Greg.

and afforded none of the protection and security, of a regular government.

At the time of his insurrection Phocas was an undistinguished soldier, raised by the acclamations of the army to the post of peril and honour;¹ his mean and cruel character, even his repulsive and hideous person, might be unknown in Rome; and Gregory might suppose that in such an exigency the choice of the army would not fall upon a man without courage, energy, or ability. It was no uncommon event in the annals of the empire to transfer the diadem to some bold military adventurer; Rome and Constantinople owed some of their best rulers to such revolutions.

But the common usage of such revolutions could not vindicate to a Christian prelate the barbarities with which Maurice and his infant family were put to death; and the high-wrought resignation of Maurice, it might have been supposed, would awaken ardent admiration in a mind like Gregory's. "If he is a coward, he will be a murderer!" such was the prophetic language of Maurice concerning the successful usurper. Maurice had taken refuge in a sanctuary; but when Phocas appeared as Emperor at the gates, when, in discharge of the first imperial duty at Constantinople, he interfered between the blue and the green factions in the Circus, which still excited fiercer animosities than those of the state, the Blues, against whom the usurper took part, broke out into menacing and significant shouts, "Maurice

¹ Theophylact, viii. 1, vol. i. p. 706, edit. Bonn. His person and character are thus described by the hatred of later writers. He was short, deformed, with a fierce look, and red hair, with his brows meeting and his chin shaved.

He had a scar on his cheek, which looked black when he was angry. He was a drunkard, lewd, sanguinary, stern and savage in speech, pitiless, brutal, and a heretic! His wife Leonta was as bad.—Cedren. Lib. i. p. 708.

is not dead!" Phocas immediately ordered the fallen emperor to be dragged from his sanctuary. His five sons were butchered before his face. The unmoved and tearless father, as each received the fatal blow, exclaimed, "Just art thou, O Lord, and righteous are thy judgements!" With a sterner feeling of self-sacrifice, if it were not, indeed, despair which took the form of frenzy, he betrayed the pious fraud of a nurse, who had substituted her own child for the youngest of the Emperor. Maurice was beheaded the last;^k the heads were cast before the throne of Phocas, who would not allow them, till compelled by their offensiveness, to be buried.

The intelligence of these events, with most, at least, of their revolting circumstances, must have arrived at Rome at the same time with that of the fall of Maurice and the elevation of Phocas. It is astonishing that even common prudence did not temper the language of the triumphant Pontiff, who launches out into a panegyric on the mercy and benignity of the usurper, calls on earth and heaven to rejoice at his accession, augurs peace and prosperity to the empire from his pious acts, and even seems to anticipate the return of the old republican freedom under the rule of the devout and gentle Phocas.^m

^k According to the biographer, Maurice owed profound obligations to Gregory, which might overbalance such merciless rejoicings at his worldly fate. He owed his eternal salvation to the prayer of Gregory. "Et quia cratio Gregorii, quâ illum petierat in terribili Dei judicio liberum ab omnibus delictis inveniri, *vacua esse non potuit*: idem Mauricius id recepit quod meruit et in cunctis suis incommodis Deum benedicens, a sempiterno

supplicio meruit liberari."—Joann. Diac. iii. 19.

^m "Lætentur cœli et exultet terra; et de benignis vestris actibus universæ reipublicæ populus, nunc usque vehementer afflictus, hilarescat. . . . Hoc namque inter reges gentium et reipublicæ Imperatores distat, quod reges gentium domini servorum sunt; Imperatores vero reipublicæ domini liberorum."—Epist. xi. 38.

The sad truth is, that Gregory was blinded by the one great absorbing object, the interest of the Church, which to him involved the interest of religion, of mankind, and of God. Loyalty, justice, candour, even humanity, yielded to the dominant feeling. Maurice was not above suspicion of heresy; the unscrupulous hostility, no doubt, of political enemies taunted him as a Marcionist. At all events, he had countenanced the usurpation of the Bishop of Constantinople. John of Constantinople, with his sanction, called himself Universal Bishop. The new emperor, out of enmity to the old, would probably espouse the opposite side. Already Phocas seems to have invited in some way the adulation of Gregory; and reverence for the see of Rome, obedience to legitimate ecclesiastical authority, were in themselves, or gave the promise of such transcendent virtues, that rebellion, murder, brutal barbarity, were overlooked, as the accidental result of circumstances, the inevitable evils of a beneficial revolution.

Phocas
Emperor.

A.D. 602-610.

So completely, by this time, had the sacerdotal obtained the superiority over the moral influence of Christianity, that even a man of Gregory's unquestioned Christian gentleness and natural humanity could not escape the predominant passion.

Gregory was spared the pain and shame of witnessing the utter falsehood of his pious vaticinations as to the glorious and holy reign of Phocas. In the second year of the tyrant's reign he closed the thirteen important years of his pontificate. The ungrateful Romans paid but tardy honours to his memory.

Death of Gre-
gory, March
10, 604.

His death was followed by a famine, which the starving multitude attributed to his wasteful dilapidation of the patrimony of the Church—that patrimony which had been so carefully administered, and so religiously devoted

to their use. Nothing can give a baser notion of their degradation than their actions. They proceeded to wreak their vengeance on the library of Gregory, and were only deterred from their barbarous ravages by the interposition of Peter, the faithful archdeacon. Peter had been interlocutor of Gregory in the wild legends contained in the Dialogues. The archdeacon now assured the populace of Rome that he had often seen the Holy Ghost, in the visible shape of a dove, hovering over the head of Gregory as he wrote. Gregory's successor therefore hesitated, and demanded that Peter should confirm his pious fiction or fancy by an oath. He ascended the pulpit, but before he had concluded his solemn oath he fell dead. That which to an hostile audience might have been a manifest judgement against perjury, was received as a divine testimony to his truth.ⁿ The Roman Church has constantly permitted Gregory to be represented with the Holy Ghost, as a dove, floating over his head.^o

The historian of Christianity is arrested by certain characters and certain epochs, which stand as landmarks between the close of one age of religion and the commencement of another. Such a character is Gregory the Great; such an epoch his pontificate, the termination of the sixth century.

ⁿ Joann. Diacon. Vit. iv. 69.

^o I am disposed to insert the epitaph on Gregory as an example of the poetry and of the religious sentiment of the times:—

* Suscipe, terra, tuo corpus de corpore
sumptum,
Reddere quod valeas, vivificante Deo.
Spiritus alta petit, leti nil jura nocebunt,
Cui vitæ alterius mors magis illa via est.
Pontificis summi hoc clauduntur membra
sepulcro,
Qui innumeris semper vivit ubique bonis.

Esuriem dapibus superavit, frigora veste,
Atque animas monitis textit ab hoste suis.
Implebat actum quicquid sermone docebat,
Esset ut exemplum mystica verba lo-
quens.
Anglos ad Christum vertit, pietate ministræ,
Acquirens fideique agmina gento nova.
Hic labor, hoc studium, hæc tibi cura, hoc,
pastor, agebas,
Ut Domini offerres plurima lucra greges.
Hisque Dei consul factus lætare triumphis,
Nam mercedem operum jam sine fine
tenes."

Remark the old Roman image in the last line but one.

Gregory, not from his station alone, but by the acknowledgment of the admiring world, was intellectually, as well as spiritually, the great model of his age. He was proficient in all the arts and sciences cultivated at that time; the vast volumes of his writings show his indefatigable powers; their popularity and their authority his ability to clothe those thoughts and those reasonings in language which would awaken and command the general mind.

His epoch was that of the final Christianisation of the world, not in outward worship alone, not in its establishment as the imperial religion, the rise of the church upon the ruin of the temple, and the recognition of the hierarchy as an indispensable rank in the social system, but in its full possession of the whole mind of man, in letters, arts as far as arts were cultivated, habits, usages, modes of thought, and in popular superstition.

Not only was heathenism, excepting in the laws and municipal institutions, Romanity itself was absolutely extinct. The reign of Theodoric had been an attempt to fuse together Roman, Teutonic, and Christian usages. Cassiodorus, though half a monk, aspired to be a Roman statesman, Boethius to be a heathen philosopher. The influence of the Roman schools of rhetoric is betrayed even in the writers of Gaul, such as Sidonius Apollinaris; there is an attempt to preserve some lingering cadence of Roman poetry in the Christian versifiers of that age. At the close of the sixth century all this has expired; ecclesiastical Latin is the only language of letters, or rather, letters themselves are become purely ecclesiastical. The fable of Gregory's destruction of the Palatine Library is now rejected, as injurious to his fame; but probably the Palatine Library if it existed, would have been so utterly neglected that

Gregory would hardly have condescended to fear its influence. His aversion to such studies is not that of dread or hatred, but of religious contempt; profane letters are a disgrace to a Christian bishop; the truly religious spirit would loathe them of itself.^p

What, then, was this Christianity by which Gregory ruled the world? Not merely the speculative and dogmatic theology, but the popular, vital, active Christianity, which was working in the heart of man; the dominant motive of his actions, as far as they were affected by religion; the principal element of his hopes and fears as regards the invisible world and that future life which had now become part of his conscious belief?

The history of Christianity cannot be understood without pausing at stated periods to survey the progress and development of this ^{Christian} ^{mythology.} mythology, which, gradually growing up and springing as it did from natural and universal instincts, took a more perfect and systematic form, and at length, at the height of the Middle Ages, was as much a part of Latin Christianity as the primal truths of the Gospel. This growth, which had long before begun, had reached a kind of adolescence in the age of Gregory, to expand into full maturity during succeeding ages. Already the creeds of the Church formed but a small portion of Christian belief. The highest and most speculative questions of theology, especially in Alexandria and Constantinople, had become watchwords of strife and faction, had stirred the passions of the lowest orders; the two Natures, or the single or double Will in Christ,

^p See the pious wonder with which he reproves a bishop of Gaul. "Post hæc pervenit ad nos, quod *sine veracundia* memorare non possumus, fraternitatem tuam grammaticam quibusdam exponere. . . . Quam grave nefandumque sit episcopus canere, quod nec laico religioso conveniat, ipse considera."—Epist. ix. 48.

had agitated the workshop of the artisan and the seats in the Circus. But when these great questions had sunk into quiescence, or, as in Latin Christianity, had never so fully occupied the general mind; when either the triumph of one party, or the general weariness, had worn out their absorbing interest, the religious mind subsided into its more ordinary occupations, and these bore but remote relation to the sublime truths of the Divine Unity and the revelation of God in Christ. As God the Father had receded, as it were, from the sight of man into a vague and unapproachable sanctity; as the human soul had been entirely centred on the more immediate divine presence in the Saviour; so the Saviour himself might seem to withdraw from the actual, at least the exclusive, devotion of the human heart, which was busied with intermediate objects of worship. Christ assumed gradually more and more of the awfulness, the immateriality, the incomprehensibility, of the Deity, and men sought out beings more akin to themselves, more open, it might seem, to human sympathies. The Eucharist, in which the Redeemer's spiritual presence, yet undefined and untransubstantiated, was directly and immediately in communion with the soul, had become more and more wrapt in mystery; though the great crowning act of faith, the interdiction of which was almost tantamount to a sentence of spiritual death, it was more rarely approached, except by the clergy. Believers delighted in those ceremonials to which they might have recourse with less timidity; the shrines and the reliques of martyrs might deign to receive the homage of those who were too profane to tread the holier ground. Already the worship of these lower objects of homage begins to intercept that to the higher; the popular mind is filling

with images either not suggested at all, or suggested but very dimly, by the sacred writings; legends of saints are supplanting, or rivalling at least, in their general respect and attention, the narratives of the Bible.

Of all these forms of worship, the most captivating, and captivating to the most amiable weaknesses of the human mind, was the devotion to the Virgin Mary. The worship of the Virgin had first arisen in the East;^a and this worship, already more than initiate, contributed, no doubt, to the passionate violence with which the Nestorian controversy was agitated, while that controversy, with its favourable issue to those who might seem most zealous for the Virgin's glory, gave a strong impulse to the worship. The denial of the title "The Mother of God," by Nestorius, was that which sounded most offensive to the general ear; it was the intelligible odious point in his heresy. The worship of the Virgin now appears in the East as an integral part of Christianity. Among Justinian's splendid edifices arose many churches dedicated to the Mother of God.^r The feast of the Annunciation is already celebrated under Justin and Justinian.^s Heraclius has images of the Virgin on his masts when he sails to Constantinople to overthrow Phocas.^t Before the end of the century the Virgin is become the tutelar deity of Constantinople, which is saved by her intercession from the Saracens.^u

In the time of Gregory the worship of the Virgin had not assumed that rank in Latin Christianity to which it rose in later centuries, though Worship of the Virgin. that second great impulse towards this worship, the unbounded admiration of virginity, had full possession of his monastic mind. With Gregory celibacy was the

^a Evagr. ii. E. v. 19. ^r Procop. de Edif. c. 6. ^s Niceph. II. E. xvii. 28.

^t Theophanes, p. 429, edit. Bonn. ^u Theophan. p. 609 *et passim*.

perfection of human nature; he looked with abhorrence on the contamination of the holy sacerdotal character, even in its lowest degree, by any sexual connexion.^x No sub-deacon, after a certain period, was to be admitted without a vow of chastity; no married sub-deacon to be promoted to a higher rank. In one of his expositions^y he sadly relates the *fall* of one of his aunts, a consecrated virgin; she had been guilty of the sin of marriage. Of all his grievances against the Exarch of Ravenna none seems more worthy of complaint than that he had encouraged certain nuns to throw off their religious habits, and to marry.^z Gregory does not seem to have waged this war against nature, however his sentiments were congenial with those of his age, with his wonted success.^a His letters are full of appeals to sovereigns and to bishops to repress the incontinence of the clergy; even monasteries were not absolutely safe.^b

It was not around the monastery alone, the centre of this preternatural agency, that the ordinary providence of God gave place to a perpetual interposition of miracu-

^x "Nullus debet ad ministerium altaris accedere, nisi cujus castitas ante susceptum ministerium sit approbata."—Epist. i. 42. He protests against the election of a bishop who had a young daughter; this bishop, however, was also simplex, and charged with usury.—viii. 40. No bigamist, or one who had married a wife not a virgin, to be received into orders. Marriages, however, Gregory declares, cannot be dissolved on account of religion; *both* parties must consent to live continently in marriage.—ix. 39.

^y That on the text, "many are called, but few chosen."

^a Epist. iv. 18.

^z The absurd story about Gregory's

fishponds paved with the skulls of the drowned infants of the Roman clergy, is only memorable as an instance of what writers of history will believe, or persuade themselves they believe, when it suits party interests. But by whom, or when, was it invented? It is much older than the Reformation.

^b Epist. viii. 21. The regulations of Gregory about a monastic life are in a wiser spirit. None were to be received as monks under 18 (Epist. i. 41); none without two years' probation (iv. 44, viii. 23); but monks who left their monasteries were to be confined for life (i. 33, 40, xii. 28). He mentions also the wandering Africans, who were often secret Manicheans.

lous power. Every Christian was environed with a world of invisible beings, who were constantly putting off their spiritual nature, and assuming forms, uttering tones, distilling odours, apprehensible by the soul of man, or taking absolute and conscious possession of his inward being. A distinction was drawn between the pure, spiritual, illimitable, incomprehensible nature of the Godhead, and the thin and subtle, but bodily forms of angels and archangels. These were perceptible to the human senses, wore the human form, spoke with human language: their substance was the thin air, the impalpable fire; it resembled the souls of men, but yet, whenever they pleased, it was visible, performed the functions of life, communicated not with the mind and soul only, but with the eye and ear of man.^c

Angels.

The hearing and the sight of religious terror were far more quick and sensitive. The angelic visitations were but rare and occasional; the more active Dæmons were ever on the watch, seizing and making every opportunity of beguiling their easy victims.^d They were everywhere present, and everywhere

Devils.

^c The following definition is of a later period, but represents the established notion:—*περὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ ἀρχαγγέλων, καὶ τῶν ὑπὲρ τούτους ἁγίων δυνάμεων, προσθήσω δὲ καὶ τὰς ἡμετέρας ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, νοερούς μὲν αὐτοὺς ἢ καθολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ γινώσκει, οὐ μὴν ἀσωμάτων πάντη καὶ ἀοράτους, ὡς ἡμεῖς οἱ Ἕλληνες φατέ* λεπτοσωμάτων δὲ καὶ ἀερώδεις ἢ πυρώδεις κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγελοὺς αὐτοὺς πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ πῦρ φλέγον. — Joann. Episcopus. Thessalon. apud. Concil. Nic. ii., Labbe, p. 354.

^d Read Cassian, who writes indeed of monks, but the belief was universal. "Nosse debemus non omnes universas dæmones passiones ingerere, sed unicuique vitio certos spiritus incubare: et alios quidem immunditias ac libidinum sordibus delectari; alios blasphemias, alios iræ furorique proclivius imminere, alios cenodoxiâ superbiâque mulceri; et unumquemque illud vitium humanis cordibus, quo ipse gaudet, inserere: sed non cunctos pariter suas ingerere pravitates, sed vicissim prout temporis vel loci vel suscipientis opportunitas provocaverit."—Cass. Coll. 7 c. 17.

betraying their presence. They ventured into the holiest places; they were hardly awed by the most devout saints: but, at the same time, there was no being too humble, to whose seduction they would not condescend—nothing in ordinary life so trivial and insignificant but that they would stoop to employ it for their evil purposes. They were without the man, terrifying him with mysterious sounds and unaccountable sights. They were within him, compelling all his faculties to do their bidding, another indwelling will besides his own, compelling his reluctant soul to perform their service. Every passion, every vice, had its especial demon; lust, impiety, blasphemy, vain-glory, pride, were not the man himself, but a foreign power working within him. The slightest act, sometimes no act at all, surrendered the soul to the irresistible indwelling agent. In Gregory's Dialogues a woman eats a lettuce without making the sign of the cross; she is possessed by a devil, who had been swallowed in the unexorcised lettuce. Another woman is possessed for admitting her husband's embraces the night before the dedication of an oratory.

Happily there existed, and existed almost at the command of the clergy, a counterworking
Martyrs. power to this fatal diabolic influence, in the perpetual presence of the saints, more especially in hallowed places, and about their own reliques.* These reliques were the treasure with which the clergy, above

* Gregory thus lays down the doctrine of his age: "Ubi in suis corporibus sancti martyres jacent, dubium, Petre, non est, quod multa valeant signa demonstrare, sicut et fecerunt, et purâ mente quærentibus innumera miracula ostendunt. Sed quia ab infirmis mentibus potest dubitari, utrumne ad exaudiendum ibi præsentibus sunt, ubi

constat, quia in suis corporibus non sunt, ita necesse est eos majora signa ostendere, ubi de eorum præsentia potest mens infirma dubitare. Quorum vero mens in Deo fixa est, tanto magis habet fidei meritum, quando eos novit et non jacere corpore, et tamen non deesse ad exaudiendum."

all the bishops of Rome, who possessed those of St. Peter and St. Paul, with countless others, ruled the mind; for by these they controlled and kept in awe, they repaired the evils wrought by this whole world of evil spirits. Happy were the churches, the monasteries, whose foundations were hallowed and secured by these sacred talismans. To doubt their presence in these dedicated shrines, in the scenes of their martyrdom, obstinately to require the satisfaction of the senses as to their presence, was an impious want of faith; belief, in proportion to the doubtfulness of the miracle, was the more meritorious. Kings and queens bowed in awe before the possessors and dispensers of these wonder-working treasures,^f which were not only preservative against worldly calamities, but absolved from sin.^g

Reliques had now attained a self-defensive power; profane hands which touched them withered; and men who endeavoured to remove them were struck dead.^h Such was the declaration of Gregory himself, to one who had petitioned for the head or some part of the body of St. Paul. It was an awful thing even to approach to worship them. Men who had merely touched the bones of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Lawrence, though with the pious design of changing their position or placing the scattered bones together, had fallen dead, in one case to the number of ten. The utmost that the Church of Rome could bestow

Reliques.

^f See letters to the Bishop of Xaintonge and Brunecchild Queen of France.

^g "Ut quod illius collum ligat ad martyrium, vestrum ab omnibus peccatis solvat."—Dialog. vi. 25.

^h On reliques, especially those of St. Peter, compare Epist. i. 29, 30, ii. 32, iii. 30, v. 50, 51, vi. 23, 25, vii. 2, 112, vii. 88, xii. 17. They

were formerly defended by law, their removal and sale prohibited. "Nemo martyrem distrahat, nemo mercetur."—C. Theod. ix. 17. Compare C. Justin. i. t. 2. Augustine speaks of vagabond monks, who traded in false reliques. "Membra martyrum, si tamen martyrum, venditant."—De Oper. Monach. c. 28.

would be a cloth which had been permitted to touch them; and even such cloths had been known to bleed. If, indeed, the chains of St. Paul would yield any of their precious iron to the file, which they often refused to do, this, he writes, he would transmit to the Empress; and he consoles her for the smallness of the gift by the miraculous power which it will inherently possess.¹

Gregory doled out such gifts with pious parsimony. A nail which contained the minutest filings from the chains of St. Peter^k was an inestimable present to a patrician, or an ex-consul, or a barbaric king. Sometimes they were inserted in a small cross: in one instance with fragments of the gridiron on which St. Lawrence was roasted.^m One of the *golden* nails of the chains of St. Peter had tempted the avarice of a profane, no doubt, a heathen or Arian, Lombard; he took out his knife to sever it off; the awe-struck knife sprung up and cut his sacrilegious throat. The Lombard king, Autharis, and his attendants, were witnesses of the miracle, and stood in terror, not daring to lift the fearful nail from the ground. A Catholic was fortunately found, by whom the nail permitted itself to be touched, and this peerless gift, so avouched, Gregory sends to a distinguished civil officer.ⁿ

Sanctity of
the clergy.

That sanctity, which thus dwelt in the reliques of the saints, was naturally gathered, as far as possible, around their own persons by the clergy, hallowed as they were, and set apart by their ordination from the common race of man; and if the

¹ All this is verbatim from the curious letter to the Empress Constantia.—iii. 30. Gregory had forgotten that he had been allowed to transport from Constantinople to Rome an arm of St. Andrew and the head of St.

Luke, and owed a more liberal return.

^k Epist. i. 29, 30. King Childbert, vi. vi. "Quæ collo vestro suspensæ a maioribus vobis omnibus tueantur."

^m Epist. ii. ii. 32.

ⁿ Dial. vi. 23; see also 25.

hierarchy had only wielded this power for self-protection; if they had but arrayed themselves in this defensive awe against the insults and cruelties of barbarians, such as the Lombards are described, it would be stern censure which would condemn even manifest imposture. We might excuse the embellishment, even the invention of the noble story of the Bishop Sanctulus, who offered his life for that of a captive deacon, before whom the Lombard executioner, when he lifted up his sword to behead him, felt his arm stiffen, and could not move it till he had solemnly sworn never to raise that sword against the life of a Christian.^o But this conservative respect for the sanctity of their order darkens too frequently into pride and inhumanity; the awful inviolability of their persons becomes a jealous resentment against even unintentional irreverence. A demoniac accuses the holy Bishop Fortunatus of refusing him the rights of hospitality; a poor peasant receives the possessed into his house, and is punished for this inferential disrespect to the Bishop by seeing his child cast into the fire and burnt before his eyes. A poor fellow with a monkey and cymbals is struck dead for unintentionally interrupting a Bishop Boniface in prayer.^p

The sacred edifices, the churches, especially, approachable to all, were yet approachable not without profound awe; in them met everything which could deepen that awe: within were the reliques of the tutelar saint, the mysteries, and the presence of the Redeemer, of God himself: beneath were the remains of the faithful dead.^q

* Dial. iii. 37. p Dial. i. 10, i. 9. as suggestive memorials.—vii. ii. 54;

^q Gregory forbade the *worship* of images, though he encouraged them compare vii. 33, iii. “Pro ictibus pictura est.”—ix. 9.

Burial in churches had now begun ; it was a special privilege. Gregory dwells on the advantage of being thus constantly suggested to the prayers of friends and relatives for the repose of the soul. But that which was a blessing to the holy was but more perilous to the unabsolved and the wicked. The sacred soil refused to receive them ; the martyrs appeared and commanded the foetid corpses to be cast out of their precincts. They were seized by devils, who did not fear to carry off their own even from those holy places.* But oblations were still effective after death. The consecrated Host has begun to possess in itself wonder-working powers. A child is cast forth from his grave, and is only persuaded to rest in quiet by a piece of the consecrated bread being placed upon his breast. Two noble women, who had been excommunicated for talking scandal, were nevertheless buried in the church ; but every time the mass was offered, their spirits were seen to rise from their tombs, and glide out of the church. It was only after an oblation had been "immolated" for them that they slept in peace.†

The mystery of the state after death began to cease to be a mystery. The subtile and invisible soul gradually materialised itself to the keen sight of the devout. A hermit declared that he had seen Theodoric, the Ostrogothic king, at the instant of death, with loose garments and sandals, led between Symmachus the patrician and John the Pope, and plunged into the burning crater of Lipari.‡ Benedict, while waking, beheld a bright and dazzling light, in which he distinctly saw the soul of Germanus, Bishop

* Dial. iv. 50, &c.

† Dial. ii. 22, 23. Compare the two last chapters of Book iv.

‡ "Disinctus et discalceatus"—such was the confusion of the attributes of soul and body.—Dial. iv. 30.

of Capua, ascend to heaven in an orb of fire, borne by angels.^u

Hell was by no means the inexorable dwelling which restored not its inhabitants. Men were transported thither for a short time, and returned Hell. to reveal its secrets to the shuddering world. Gregory's fourth book is entirely filled with legends of departing and of departed spirits, several of which revisit the light of day. On the locality of hell Gregory is modest, and declines to make any peremptory decision. On purgatory too he is dubious, though his final conclusion appears to be that there is a purgatorial fire, which may purify the soul from very slight sins.^x Some centuries must elapse before those awful realms have formed themselves into that dreary and regular topography, which Dante partly created out of his own sublime imagination, partly combined from all the accumulated legends which had become the universal belief of Christendom.

The most singular of these earlier journeys into the future world are the adventures of a certain Stephen, the first part of which Gregory declares he had heard more than once from his own mouth,^y and which he relates, apparently intending to be implicitly believed. Stephen had to all appearance died in Constantinople, but, as the embalmer could not be found, he was left unburied the whole night. During that time he went down into hell, where he saw many things which he had not before believed. But when he came before the Judge, the Judge said, I did not send for this man, but for Stephen the smith. Gregory's friend Stephen was too

^u Dial. iv. 30.

^x "Sed tamen de quibusdam levitus ignis credendus est."—Dial. iv. 39.

^y "De semet ipso mihi narrare con-
culpis esse ante judicium purgatorius suaverat."

happy to get back, and on his return found his neighbour Stephen the smith dead. But Stephen learned not wisdom from his escape. He died of the plague in Rome, and with him appeared to die a soldier, who returned to reveal more of these fearful secrets of the other world, and the fate of Stephen. The soldier passed a bridge, beneath it flowed a river, from which rose vapours, dark, dismal, and noisome. Beyond the bridge (the imagination could but go back to the old Elysian fields) spread beautiful, flowery, and fragrant meadows, peopled by spirits clothed in white. In these were many mansions, vast and full of light. Above all rose a palace of golden bricks, to whom it belonged he could not read. On the bridge he recognised Stephen, whose foot slipped as he endeavoured to pass. His lower limbs were immediately seized by frightful forms, who strove to drag him to the foetid dwellings below. But white and beautiful beings caught his arms, and there was a long struggle between the conflicting powers. The soldier did not see the issue of the conflict.

Such were among the stories avouched by the highest ecclesiastical authority, and commended it might seem by the uninquiring faith of the ruling intellect of his age—such among the first elements of that universal popular religion which was the Christianity of ages. This religion gradually moulded together all which arose out of the natural instincts of man, the undying reminiscences of all the older religions, the Jewish, the Pagan, and the Teutonic, with the few and indistinct glimpses of the invisible world and the future state of being in the New Testament, into a vast system, more sublime perhaps for its indefiniteness, which, being necessary in that condition of mankind, could not but grow up out of the kindled imagination and religious

faith of Christendom ; and such religion the historian who should presume to condemn as a vast plan of fraud, or a philosopher who should venture to disdain as a fabric of folly, only deserving to be forgotten, would be equally unjust, equally blind to its real uses, assuredly ignorant of its importance and its significance in the history of man. For on this, the popular Christianity, popular as comprehending the highest as well as the lowest in rank, and even in intellectual estimation, turns the whole history of man for many centuries. It is at once the cause and the consequence of the sacerdotal dominion over mankind ; the groundwork of authority at which the world trembled ; which founded and overthrew kingdoms, bound together or set in antagonistic array nations, classes, ranks, orders of society. Of this, the parent, when the time arrived, of poetry, of art, the Christian historian must watch the growth and mark the gradations by which it gathered into itself the whole activity of the human mind, and quickened that activity till at length the mind outgrew that which had been so long almost its sole occupation. It endured till faith, with the Schoolmen, led into the fathomless depths of metaphysics, began to aspire after higher truths ; with the Reformers, attempting to refine religion to its primary spiritual simplicity, gradually dropped, or left but to the humblest and most ignorant, at least to the more imaginative and less practical part, of mankind, this even yet prolific legendary Christianity, which had been the accessory and supplementary Bible, the authoritative and accepted, though often unwritten, Gospel of centuries.

BOOK IV.

CONTEMPORARY CHRONOLOGY.

| POPPES. | | PATRIARCHS OF CONSTANTINOPLE. | | EMPERORS OF THE EAST. | | EXARCHS OF RAVENNA. | |
|------------------------|------|--|------|---|------|-------------------------------|------|
| A.D. | A.D. | A.D. | A.D. | A.D. | A.D. | A.D. | A.D. |
| | | Cyriacus | 610 | | | Callinicus | 602 |
| Gregory I. died | 604 | | | 602 Phocas | 610 | | |
| 604 Sabinianus | 606 | | | | | 603 Smaragdus (re- stored) | 610 |
| 606 Boniface III. | 607 | | | | | 610 John Remigius | 615 |
| 608 Boniface IV. | 615 | 610 Sergius | 633 | 610 Heraclius | 641 | 615 Eleutherius | 619 |
| | | | | | | 619 Isaac | 643 |
| 615 Deusdedit | 618 | | | | | | |
| 619 Boniface V. | 625 | | | | | | |
| 625 Honorius I. | 638 | | | | | | |
| 633 Severinus | 640 | 639 Pyrrhus, deposed | 641 | | | | |
| 640 John IV. | 642 | 641 Paul II. | 654 | 641 Constantine III., Heraclionas | | | |
| | | | | 642 Constantine II. | 668 | | |
| 642 Theodorus I. | 649 | | | | | 643 Calliopas | 650 |
| 649 Martin I. | 655 | 654 Pyrrhus, reinstated | 655 | | | 650 Olympius | 652 |
| 654 Eugenius I. | 657 | 655 Peter | 668 | | | 652 Calliopas again | 667 |
| 657 Vitalian | 672 | | | | | | |
| | | 666 Thomas II. | 669 | | | | |
| | | 689 John V. | 675 | 608 Constantine Pogo- natus | 685 | | |
| 672 Adeodatus | 676 | | | | | | |
| 676 Donus | 678 | 675 Constantine, deposed | 677 | | | | |
| 678 Agatho | 681 | 677 Theodorus, deposed | 678 | | | | |
| | | 678 George I. | 683 | | | | |
| 682 Leo II. | 683 | | | | | | |
| 683 (?) Benedict II. | 685 | 683 Theodorus, rein- stated | 686 | | | | |
| 686 Conon | 687 | 685 Paul III. | 688 | 685 Justinian II. | 694 | 687 John Platon | 702 |
| 687 Paschal (antipope) | 692 | | | | | | |
| 687 Theodorus | | | | | | | |
| 687 Sergius I. | 701 | 698 Callinicus, deposed | 705 | | | | |
| | | | | 694 Leontius I. | 697 | | |
| | | | | 697 Tiberius | 704 | 702 Theophylact | 710 |
| 701 John VI. | 705 | | | | | | |
| | | | | 704 Justinian II., re- stored | 711 | | |
| 705 John VII. | 707 | 705 Cyrus, deposed | 712 | | | 710 John Rixocopus | 713 |
| 708 Sisinnius | | | | | | | |
| 708 Constantine I. | 715 | | | 717 Philippicus | 718 | | |
| | | 712 John VI., deposed | 715 | 713 Anastasius II. | 715 | 713 Scholasticus | 725 |
| | | | | 715 Theodosius III. | 717 | | |
| 715 Gregory II. | 731 | 715 Germanus, deposed | 731 | 717 Leo the Isaurian | 741 | | |
| | | | | | | 725 Paul the Patrician | 727 |
| | | | | | | 727 Eutychius the Eunuch | 752 |
| 731 Gregory III. | 741 | 731 Anastasius | 753 | | | | |
| | | " deposed | 756 | | | | |
| 741 Zacharias | 742 | " died | 754 | 741 Constantine Copro- nymus | 775 | Conquered by Lombards. | |
| 742 Stephen II. | | | | | | | |
| 743 Stephen III. | 757 | 754 Constantine, banished —beheaded | 766 | | | | |
| 757 Paul I. | 767 | | | | | | |
| | | 766 Nicetas the Eunuch | 780 | | | | |
| 767 Constantine II. | 768 | | | | | | |
| 768 Philip | | | | | | | |
| 768 Stephen IV. | 772 | | | | | | |
| 772 Hadrian I. | 795 | | | | | | |
| | | 780 Paul IV., deposed | 784 | 775 Leo IV. | 780 | | |
| | | 784 Tarasius | 806 | 780 Constantine Porphy- rogenitus, with Irene | 787 | | |
| 795 Leo III. | 816 | | | 797 Irene | | | |
| | | 808 Nicephorus, deposed | 815 | | | | |
| | | 815 Theodorus Cassiteras | 821 | | | | |

BOOK IV.

CONTEMPORARY CHRONOLOGY.

| LOMBARD KINGS. | | KINGS OF FRANCE. | | | CALIPHS. |
|----------------------------------|-------|---|--|---------------------|---------------------------|
| A. D. | A. D. | <i>Burgundy.</i> | <i>Austrasia.</i> | <i>Neustria.</i> | A. D. |
| 590 Agulf | 616 | A. D. 691 Thierry II. | Theodbert II. | Chlotaire II. A. D. | |
| | | 614 Chlotaire II., alone, 623 | | | |
| 616 Theodelinda and Adelwald | 626 | | <i>Part of Aquitaine.</i> | | 622 Mohammed |
| 626 Arivald | 638 | 628 Dagobert | Charibert | 630 | 632 Abubeker |
| 638 Rothari | 654 | Dagobert, alone, 627 <i>Austrasia.</i> | | <i>Neustria.</i> | 634 Omar |
| 654 Roald | 659 | 657 Sigbert I.. | 654 Clovis II. | 653 | |
| | | 654 Childeric II. | | | 644 Othman |
| 659 Aribert | 662 | | 656 Chlotaire III (Queen Bathildis guardian.) | 658 | 656 Ali |
| 662 Gondibert | 663 | | | | 660 Moawiyah |
| 663 Grimoald | 672 | | 663 Childeric II., alone | | |
| | | | <i>Part of Austrasia.</i> | | |
| 672 Garibald, Pertinax | 680 | 673 Thierry III. | 672 Dagobert II. | | |
| | | | | | 679 Yezid |
| 680 Cunibert with Per- tharix | 691 | | 679 Thierry III., alone, 691 | | 685 Abdulmelik |
| | | | (687 Pepin, Mayor of the Palace, 714) | | |
| 691 Cunibert alone | 701 | | 690 Clovis III. | 695 | |
| 701 Luitprand | | | 695 Childeric III. | 711 | |
| 7-2 Aribert II. | 732 | | | | 705 Walid I. |
| | | | 711 Dagobert III. | | |
| 712 Ansprand | 713 | | | | 714 Suleiman |
| 713 Luitprand | 743 | | 716 Chilperic II. Chlotaire IV. | | 717 Omar II. |
| | | | 720 Thierry IV. | | 719 Yezid II. |
| | | | | | 723 Hisham |
| | | | (736 Charles Martel, Mayor of Palace) | | |
| 743 Hildebrand | 743 | | 743 Childeric III. | 751 | 742 Walid II. |
| 744 Ratchi Duke of Friuli | | | | | 743 Yezid III. |
| 750 Astolphus | 756 | | | | 744 Ibrahim |
| | | | 751 Pepin | | 745 Merwan |
| 756 Desiderius | 774 | | | | 749 Abdalla the Abbasside |
| | | | | | 753 Abugyafar Almansur |
| | | | 763 Chailennagne and Carloman | | |
| | | | 772 Charlemagne, alone | | 775 Mohammed Muattas |
| | | | | | 785 Mun |
| | | | | | 790 Haroun Alraschid |

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

Mohammed.

THE seventh century of Christianity was destined to behold a new religious revolution, only inferior in the extent of its religious and social influence to Christianity itself. Christianity might seem, notwithstanding her internal dissensions, while slowly subduing the whole of Europe, to be still making gradual encroachments in Asia, and at least to apprehend no formidable invasion within her own frontier. The conflict which had raged on the eastern boundaries of the Roman world, in which at one time the Persians had become masters of Syria and plundered the religious treasures of Jerusalem, was a war of the two empires of Rome and Persia, not of Christianity and Fire-worship. The danger which threatened the Byzantine empire, and which, if unaverted, would have yielded up Asia, and even Constantinople, to the followers of Zoroaster, had been arrested by the great military ability and enterprise of Heraclius, the successor of the tyrant Phocas on the throne. But though Persian conquest, had it spread over Asia Minor and Syria and into Europe, might have brought on a dangerous collision with the religion of the conquerors, yet the issue could not eventually have been fatal, even to the domi-

Roman East
at commence-
ment of
seventh cen-
tury.

War of
Persia.

nance of Christianity. Zorcastrianism had failed to propagate itself with any great success in the parts of Christian Armenia which it had subjugated: nor can we imagine that religion, even when advancing under the victorious banner of its believers, as likely to obtain any firm hold on the inhabitants of Western Asia or Europe, still less as tending to extirpate the deep-rooted Christianity of those regions.

In the mean time, in an obscure district of a country esteemed by the civilised world as beyond its boundaries, a savage, desert, and almost inaccessible region, suddenly arose an antagonist religion, Mohammedanism in appearance. which was to reduce the followers of Zoroaster to a few scattered communities, to invade India, and tread under foot the ancient Brahminism, as well as the more widespread Buddhism, even beyond the Ganges; to wrest her most ancient and venerable provinces from Christianity; to subjugate by degrees the whole of her Eastern dominions, and Roman Africa from Egypt to the Straits of Gibraltar; to assail Europe at its western extremity; to possess the greater part of Spain, and even to advance to the banks of the Loire; more than once to make the elder Rome tremble for her security, and finally to establish itself in triumph within the new Rome of Constantine. Asiatic Christianity sank more and more into obscurity. It dragged on its existence within the Mohammedan empire as a contemptuously tolerated religion; in the Byzantine empire it had still strength to give birth to new controversies—that of Iconoclasm, and even still later that concerning the divine light. It was not without writers, in learning, perhaps, and theological argument, superior to any in the West—John of Damascus, Eustathius of Thessalonica. Yet its aggressive vigour had entirely departed, and it was happy to

be allowed inglorious repose, to take no part in that great war waged by the two powers, now the only two living, active, dominant powers, which contested the dominion of the world—Mohammedanism and Latin Christianity. These implacable adversaries might appear to divide mankind into two unmingling, irreconcilable races. Like the Iran and Touran of the remoter East, the realm of light and the realm of darkness, each is constantly endeavouring to push forward its barriers, appearing on every side, or advancing into the heart of the hostile territory. The realm of darkness, as regards civilisation, at times might seem to be the realm of light, the realm of light that of darkness; till eventually Mohammedanism sank back into its primeval barbarism, Latin Christianity, or, rather, the Christianity of later Europe, emerged into its full, it may be hoped, yet growing authority, as the religion, not only of truth, but of civilisation.

Arabia, the parent of this new religion, had been a world within itself; the habits and character of the people might seem both to secure them from the invasion of foreign conquerors and to prohibit them from more than a desultory invasion of other countries. Divided into almost countless petty kingdoms, an aggregate of small, independent, and immemorially hostile tribes, they had no bond of union to blend them into a powerful confederacy. The great empires of the East, of Greece and of Rome, had aspired to universal sovereignty, while these wandering tribes of the desert, and even the more settled and flourishing kingdoms of Southern Arabia had pursued unknown and undisturbed their intestine warfare. A nominal and precarious sovereignty had been exercised by some of the Asiatic conquerors over the frontier tribes; but the poverty and

irreclaimable wandering habits of most of these, with the impracticable nature of the country, had protected from the ambition of the conquerors the southern regions, of which the wealth and fertility had been greatly exaggerated, and which were supposed to produce all those rich commodities, in fact, transmitted to them from India. Arabia formed no part of the great eastern monarchies. Alexander passed on from Egypt and Syria to the remoter East. His successors in Egypt and in Syria, the Ptolemies and Seleucidæ, were in general content with commercial relations, carried on with Arabia or through Arabia. The Romans, who might seem to scrutinise the world in order that nothing might escape their ambition, had once or twice turned their arms towards the fabled wealth of Arabia.^a The unsuccessful, if not ignominious, result of the expedition of Ælius Gallus had taught how little was to be gained, how much hazarded, in such a warfare. The Romans contented themselves with the acquisition of Petra, a city not strictly Arabian, but Edomite in its origin, though for some centuries occupied by the Nabatean Arabs, a commercial emporium, as a station between the East and the Roman world, of the greatest importance, and adorned, during the age of the Antonines, with magnificent buildings in that colossal half-barbarous Roman style with which at that time they built temples in so many of the great cities of Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt.

If Arabia offered no great temptation to the foreign invader from the civilised world, the civilised world had as little dread of any dangerous irruption from these

The "*intactis nunc Arabum in-* | relation in which Arabia stood to the
vides gazis" of Horace, shows the | rapacity and to the arms of Rome.

wild and disunited tribes. Here and there, perhaps, beyond the proper limits of Arabia, in districts, however, which seemed to belong to their marauding habits rather than to the settled cultivation of more advanced nations, upon the eastern frontier of Syria and towards the Euphrates, had arisen Arabian kingdoms. The Nabatean Petra had attained to some power during the first period of Christianity, had waged an aggressive war against Rome, and even gained possession of Damascus. This territory, however, had become a Roman province; but down to the reign of Justinian petty Saracenic chieftains who assumed the name of kings were engaged on either side in the interminable wars between Rome and Persia. Yet while the prolific North and East were periodically discharging their teeming hordes upon Asia and Europe, Arabia might seem either not gifted with this overflow of population, or to consume it within her own limits. The continual internal wars; polygamy, which became more unfavourable to the increase of the population from the general usage of destroying female infants;^b the frugal, nomadic, and even the imaginative character of the race, which seemed to attach them to their own soil, and to suppress all desire of conquest in softer, less open, more settled regions, conspired to maintain the immutable character of Arabia and of the Arab people; their national and tribal pride, their ancient traditions, their virtues, their polity, and even their commerce, which absorbed the activity of the more enterprising, might appear to coop within itself this peculiar people, as neither destined nor qualified to burst the limits of their own peninsula, or to endanger the peace, the liberties, or the religion of the world.

On a sudden, when probably only vague rumours had reached the courts of Persia or of Constantinople of the religious revolution which had taken place in Medina and Mecca (a revolution which might seem to plunge the whole region in still more desperate internal hostility), Arabia appeared in arms against mankind. A religious fanaticism, almost unexampled in its depth and intensity, had silenced all the fierce feuds of centuries; the tribes and kingdoms had become one; armies, seemingly inexhaustible, with all the wild courage of marauding adventure and the formidable discipline of stubborn unity of purpose, poured forth, one after another, from the desert; and at their head appeared, not indeed the apostle himself (he had discharged his mission in organising this terrible confederacy), but a military sovereign who united in himself the civil and spiritual supremacy, whose authority rested on the ardent attachment of a clan towards its chief, and the blind and passive obedience of a sect to a religious leader. The reigning Caliph was king and pontiff, according to the oriental theory of sovereignty the father of his people, but likewise the successor of the Prophet, the delegate of God.

Mohammedanism appeared before the world as a stern and austere monotheism, but it was a practical not a speculative monotheism.* It had nothing abstract, indistinct, intellectual in its primary notion of the Godhead. Allah was no philosophic first cause, regulating the universe by established laws, while itself stood aloof in remote and unapproachable majesty. It was an ever-present, ever-working energy, still accomplishing

* One of the sublimest descriptions of God may be found in the second chapter of the Korân, Sale's translation, i. p. 47.

its own purposes.^d Its predestinarianism was not a fixed and predetermined law wrought out by the obedient elements of the human world, but the actual, immediate operation of the Deity, governing all things by his sole will,^e and through his passive ministers.^f It threw aside with implacable and disdainful aversion all those gradations as it were of divinity which approximated man to God and God to man—the Asiatic or Gnostic Æons and Emanations; the impersonated Ideas of the later Platonism, with their all-comprehending Logos; above all, the co-equal Persons of the Christian Trinity. Nothing existed but the Creator and the Creation: the Creator one in undistinguished, undivided Unity, the Creation, which comprehended every being intermediate between God and man: angels, devils, genii, all owed their being to almighty power, and were liable to death or to extinction.

Mohammedanism, in more respects than one, was a republication of Mosaic Judaism, with its strong principle of national and religious unity (for wherever it went it carried its language), with its law simplified to a few rigid and unswerving observances, and the world for its land of Canaan; the world which

^d See the fine passage, ch. vi. vol. i. p. 166, &c.

^e "It is he who hath created the heavens and the earth in truth; and whenever he saith unto a thing, Be, it is." This whole chapter is full of striking passages. "And whomsoever God shall please to direct, he will open his breast to receive the faith of Islam; but whomsoever he shall please to lead into error, he will render his breast strait and narrow, as though

he were climbing up to heaven (*i.e.* attempting an impossibility). Thus does God inflict a terrible punishment on those who believe not."—p. 178.

^f "Though men and angels and devils conspire together to put one single atom in motion, or cause it to cease its motion without his will and approbation, they would not be able to do it."—Creed of orthodox Mohammedans in Ockley, vol. ii. p. li.

it was commissioned to subdue to the faith of Islam, and to possess in the right of conquest.

Yet nothing was less simple than the popular Mohammedanism. It rationalised, if it might be called Rationalism, only in its conception of the Deity. It had its poetic^f element, its imaginative excitement, adapted to the youthful barbarianism of the state of society, and to the Oriental character. It created, or rather acknowledged, an intermediate world, it dealt prodigally in angelic appearances, and believed in another incorporeal, or, rather, subtly-corporeal race, between angels and men; the genii, created out of a finer substance, but more nearly akin to man in their weaknesses and trials.^h The whole life of man was passed under the influence, sometimes in direct communion with these half-spiritual beings.ⁱ Mohammedanism borrowed its poetic machinery from all the existing religions—from Magianism, Orientalism, Judaism, Christianity. No religion was less original.^k Its assertion of the divine unity was a

^f “They (the idolaters) say the Korân is a confused heap of dreams; nay, he has forged it; *nay, he is a poet.*”—ch. xxii. v. ii. p. 152.

^h “He created men of dried clay, like an earthen vessel, but he created the genii of fire, clear from the smoke.”—Ch. lv. v. ii. p. 209: compare vi. i. p. 178.

ⁱ Mohammedan tradition adopts for the genii the definition of the dæmons in the Talmud. They have three qualities of angels: I. They have wings. II. They pass from one end of the world to the other. III. They know future events, but not certainly: they only hear them from behind the cur-

tain. They have three human qualities. I. They eat and drink. II. They have carnal appetites. III. They die.—Geiger, *Was hat Mohammed*, p. 83.

^k In this respect, how different from Christianity! The religion of Christ, on its first promulgation, had to introduce into the world new conceptions of the Deity, new forms of worship, its sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, new vices, and new virtues; a new history of man, both as to his creation and his destiny; new religious ancestors, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the Jewish prophets, besides the divine author of the rel-

return to Judaism, a stern negation at once of the vulgar polytheism which prevailed among the ruder Arab tribes, and of the mysterious doctrines of Trinitarian Christianity. As to the intermediate world it only popularised still further the popular belief. Its angels were those already familiar to the general mind through Talmudic Judaism and Christianity; its genii were those of the common Eastern superstition. The creation, as affirmed in Islam, was strictly biblical;^m the history of man was that of the Old Testament, recognised in the New, though not without a large admixture of Jewish legend. The forefathers of the Mohammedan, as of the Jewish and Christian religions, were Adam, Noah, Abraham; and to the older prophets of God, among whom were included Moses and Jesus, were only added two local prophets, sent on special missions to certain of the Arab tribes, to Ad and to Thamud.ⁿ Even Mohammedan fable had none of the inventive originality of fiction. There is scarcely a legend which is not either from the Talmud, or rather the source of most of the Talmud, the religious tradition of the Jews^o or the spurious (not the

gion and his apostles. All these names were almost strange to the Roman world, and were to supersede those already sacred and familiar to the thoughts of all the Christian converts.

^m Compare Geiger, p. 64; but Mohammed was impatient of the ascribing *rest* to God on the seventh day. The strictness of the Jewish Sabbath was enforced upon them for their obstinacy in preferring the day of the supposed *rest* of the Almighty to Friday, the proper day of divine worship.—ch. xvi. v. ii. p. 94.

ⁿ These were no doubt the mythic forms of some historic events; the impersonated memorials of some fearful calamities ascribed to the hand of God; and still living in Arabic tradition.

^o Sale has traced in his notes many of the fables in the Korân to their Talmudic or Rabbinical sources. A prize Essay, on a theme proposed by the University of Bonn, "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum genommen," by Abraham Geiger, Rabbi of Wiesbaden, is modest, sensible, and contains much curious in-

genuine) Gospel of Christianity. The last day, the judgement, the resurrection, hell, and paradise, though invested in a circumstantiality of detail, much of it foreign, as far as we can judge, to the Pharisaic notions of our Saviour's day, and singularly contrasting with the modest and less material images of the New Testament, were already parts of the common creed. The Korân has scarcely surpassed the grosser notions of another life which were already received by the Talmudic Jews and the Judaising Christians, the Chiliasts of the early ages. It only adapted this materialism to the fears and hopes of a Bedouin and a polygamous people. It may be doubted whether it goes beyond the terrific imaginations of the Talmudists in those minute and particular effects of hell-fire which glare in all its pages.^p In its paradise it dwelt on that most exquisite luxury to a wanderer in the desert, perennial rivers of cool pure water; and it added a hareem to the joys of the blessed.^q

In the rites and ceremonial of Islam there was nothing which required any violent disruption of religious habits: its four great precepts only gave a new impulse and a new direction to established religious observances. I. *Prayer*, is the universal language of all religion; and

formation. The names for Paradise and Hell, the garden of Eden, and Gehenna, are Hebrew; and he gives twelve other words in the Korân, including Shechinah, all taken from Rabbinical Judaism.

^p Korân passim, e.g. "And they who believe not shall have garments of fire fitted unto them, boiling water shall be poured upon their heads, their bowels shall be dissolved thereby, and also their skins, and they shall be

beaten with maces of iron. So often as they shall endeavour to get out of hell because of the anguish of their torments, they shall be dragged into the same, and their tormentors shall say unto them, 'Taste ye the pains of burning.'"—ch. xxii. v. ii. p. 169.

^q For Paradise, ch. xlvi. ii. p. 377. "The rivers of incorruptible water, of milk, of wine, of clarified honey, and all kinds of fruits." Still more fully. lv. ii. 411.

the sense of the perpetual presence, the direct and immediate agency of God in all human things, enforced by the whole Mohammedan creed, as well as the concentration of all earthly worship on one single, indivisible God, has maintained a strict and earnest spirit of adoration throughout the Mohammedan world. II. The natural sympathies of man; the narrower, yet impressive, humanity of the Old Testament, which had bound the Jew to relieve the distressed of his brethren with a generosity which, contrasting with his apparent hostility to the rest of mankind, had moved the wonder of the heathen; the more beautiful, the prodigal, the universal charity of the Christian; perhaps the hospitable habits of the Arabs, had already consecrated *Almsgiving* as among the highest of religious virtues; and Mohammedanism did not degenerate in this respect from what may be called her religious parents. III. As to *Fasting*, the Ramadan was but Lent under another name. IV. The Christianity of the Gospel had in vain abrogated the peculiar sanctity of places. The nature of man, yet imperfectly spiritualised, had sunk back to the old excitements of devotion; the grave of the Redeemer had become to the Christian what the site of the Temple was to the Jew; and the Korân, by turning the hearts of all its votaries to the Holy Cities, to Medina and Mecca, availed itself of the universal passion for *pilgrimages*.^{*}

The six great articles in the faith of Islam were in like manner the elemental truths of all religions: though peculiarly expressed, they were neither repugnant to human reason nor to prevalent habits of thought. Most

^{*} Gregory the Great mentions pilgrimages to Mount Sinai as still performed in his day, and by women.—Epist. iii. 44.

men, in some form, believed—I. In God II. In his Angels. III. In his Scriptures (in divine revelation). IV. In his Prophets. V. In the Resurrection and Day of Judgement. VI. In God's absolute decree and predetermination of good and evil, though this was softened in most creeds into a vague acknowledgement of God's providential government.

The one new and startling article in the creed of Islam was the divine mission of the prophet Mohammed, the apostle of God. Yet Mohammed was but the successor of other prophets; the last of the long and un-failing line of divine messengers to man. Mankind in general might demand miraculous and supernatural proofs of a prophetic mission. The Jew might sullenly disclaim a prophet sprung from the bastard race of Ishmael; the Christian might assume the gospel to be the final and conclusive message to man; but Mohammed averred that his mission was vouched by the one great miracle, the Korân; that he was foreshown both in the Law and in the Gospel, though these prophecies had been obscured or falsified by the jealousy of the dominant party among the Jews and Chris- Mohammed. tians. Mohammed himself remains, and must remain, an historic problem: his character, his motives, his designs are all equally obscure. Was the Prophet possessed with a lofty indignation at the grovelling idolatry of his countrymen? Had he contrasted the sublime simplicity of the Mosaic unity of God with the polytheism of the Arabs; or, that which appeared to him only the more subtle and disputatious polytheism of the Christians? Had he the lofty political ambition of uniting the fierce and hostile tribes into one confederacy, of forming Arabia into a nation, and so of becoming the founder of a dynasty and an empire; and did

he imagine his simple religion as the bond of the confederacy? Did he contemplate from the first foreign conquest or foreign proselytism? or did his more pliant ambition grow out of and accommodate itself to the circumstances of the time, submit to change and modification, and only fully develop itself according to existing exigencies? At this distance of time, and through the haze of adoring and of hostile tradition, it is difficult to trace clearly the outward actions of the Prophet, how much more the inward impulses, the thoughts and aspirations of his secret spirit. To the question whether Mohammed was hero, sage, impostor, or fanatic, or blended, and blended in what proportions, these conflicting elements in his character? the best reply is the favourite reverential phrase of Islam, "God knows."^s

^s Maracci wrote of Mohammed with the learning, but in the spirit, of a monk. With Prideaux he is a vulgar impostor. Spanheim began to take a higher view of his character. Sale and Gagnier, while vindicating him from the coarse invectives of former writers, kindled into admiration, which was accused of approaching to belief. With Boulanvilliers, he rose into a benefactor of the human race; with White and his coadjutors he became the subject of some fine pulpit declamation. Gibbon is brilliant, full, on the whole fair; but his brilliancy on the propagation of Mohammedanism singularly contrasts with his cold, critical view of that of Christianity. Passing over Savary, Volney, in our own times we have the elaborate biography of Dr. Weil, whom scarcely anything has escaped, and Caussin de Perceval's *Histoire des Arabes* (Paris, 1848), a work of admirable industry and learning, which, with the history and genealogy of the early tribes, embraces the time of Mohammed and his two successors. Major Price, whose contributions to the history of Mohammedanism, from the Shiite (the Persian) traditions (all which we had before were Sunnite and Arabic), are invaluable, of Mohammed himself gives us nothing new. But Col. Vans Kennedy furnishes some extracts from Tabari, a writer some centuries earlier than any of the known biographers of the Prophet, Elmacin, and Abulfeda. Tabari wrote within three centuries of the Hejira, and his account is at once the most striking and most credible which has appeared in Europe. Col. Vans Kennedy's own appreciation of the Prophet (which may be overlooked in a criticism on Voltaire's *Mahomet*) is the most just with which I am

The Korân itself is not above suspicion, at least as far as its absolute integrity and authenticity. It was put together some time after the death of Mohammed,[†] avowedly not in the exact order of its delivery. It is not certain whether it contains all that the Prophet revealed, or those revelations in their original and unaltered form.[‡]

The Korân.

acquainted.—See Bombay Transactions, vol. iii. This passage appears to have escaped the notice of Dr. Weil, whose recent “Mohammed der Prophet” is not only laborious, but also candid and comprehensive. Now, however (1855), the life of Mohammed (part I.), by Dr. Sprenger (Allahabad, 1851) has greatly enlarged our knowledge of, and enabled us to appreciate the earlier traditions of Islam. Still while duly grateful for these valuable accessions to our knowledge, and with all respect for the great learning and industry of Dr. Sprenger, I must demur to some of his conclusions. Islam, he asserts, was long anterior to Mohammed, believed by many before he preached it, “It was begotten by the spirit of the time; it was the inevitable birth of the age and people, the voice of the Arabic nation” (pp. 44, 165, 175). True, as far as the first article of the faith, there is but one God: but it was the second, Mohammed is his Prophet; it was this, forced as a divine revelation into the belief of so large a part of mankind, which was the power, the influence, the all-subduing energy of Islam; the

principle of its unity, of its irresistible fanaticism, its propagation, its victories, its empire, its duration.*

* In the reign of Abubeker, who employed Mohammed’s secretary, Zeid Abu Thabit. Zeid collected every extant fragment which was in different hands, written on parchment, on leather, on palm leaves, on bones, or stones.—Weil, Mohammed der Prophet, p. 349; Caussin de Perceval, Histoire des Arabes.

‡ My own judgement is in favour of the authenticity of the Korân (but I know it only from translations). The evident suggestion of the different chapters by the exigencies of different events, and the manifest contradictions, are proofs of its antiquity. The convenient doctrine of abrogation, by which a later sentence annuls a former, and which seems to have been admitted from the first, implies the general integrity of the book.† Dr. Weil believes that though the Korân must not be considered without omission or interpolation, there is no important change, addition, or omission. But see on Othman’s revision—Weil, die Chalifen, note. i. p. 168. Dr. Sprenger

* Dr. Sprenger’s ‘Life’ has now appeared in a much enlarged form, I think with increased fancifulness; as also the more calm—if less learned, more trustworthy—work of Mr. Muir.

† There are 225 verses which contain doctrines or laws recalled by later revelations—Weil, p. 355.

Mohammed^x was an orphan of a noble family; after the death of his parents he was maintained, first by his grandfather, afterwards by his father's brother. The first twenty-five years of his life passed in obscurity, which the earlier and more authoritative tradition has not ventured to embellish with wonders ominous of his future greatness.^y

Chadijah, a wealthy widow of his kindred, chose Mohammed *the faithful* (his character had gained him that honourable appellation) to conduct her commercial affairs. He travelled with this charge to Syria,^z and his success was so great in comparison with that of the former agents of Chadijah, that on his return the grateful widow, moved, according to the simpler account, by the prosperity of her trade in his hands, according to the more marvellous, by wonders which took place on his journey, bestowed herself and her wealth on the young and handsome merchant.^a

Twelve more years, from his marriage at the age of twenty-eight, passed away. In his fortieth year, that eventful period in oriental life,^b the Prophet began to listen to the first intimations of his divine mission.

says, "Though not free from interpolation, yet there seems no reason to doubt its authenticity," p. 63. The best account of the question, in my opinion, is in Muir, ch. i.

^x Mohammed, born April, 570; April, 13, 571, or May 13, 569. Sprenger, p. 75.

^y For the later traditions, wild and fantastic enough, see Dr. Weil, p. 23, note 6, and 26, note 1, and Muir. Notes to Ch. 1.

^z Bosra is named as the mart to which Mohammed conducted the caravan of Chadijah. The admiration of

ships (as one of the most wonderful gifts of God), which perpetually occurs in the Korân, leads me to suspect that the writer had seen more of maritime scenes, in one of the ports of Syria perhaps, than what he may have gathered from accidental glimpses of the navigation of the Red Sea.

^a For the description of Mohammed's person, see Dr. Weil, p. 340; Causin de Perceval, iii. 332, and on his habits at great length, Sprenger, 84, 94; Muir, ii. 28.

^b Some intended analogy with the life of Moses might be suspected; but

The caves of mount Hira, in the immediate neighbourhood of Mecca, were already hallowed, it is said, by Arabian superstition. During one of the holy months^c men were accustomed to retire to a kind of hermitage, built or scooped out of the rocks, for devout meditation: that meditation which, in an imaginative people, is so apt to kindle into communion with the unearthly and invisible. It was in one of these caves that Mohammed received his first communication from heaven.^d But the form assumed by the vision, the illusion, or the daring conception of Mohammed, showed plainly in what school he had received his religious impressions. It was none of the three hundred and sixty-six deities of the old Arabian religion, or the astral influences of the dominant Tsabaism, it was Gabriel, the divine messenger, hallowed in the Jewish and the Christian scriptures, who appeared as a mighty and majestic figure, with his feet upon the earth and his head in the heavens.^e After this solemn interview, as Mohammed walked along (so fully was his mind wrapt in its vision), the stones and clods seemed to exclaim, "Prophet of God."^f By day the inanimate works of God thus summoned him to his office, by night the angel of God

40, it is well known, is the indefinite number in the East, and no doubt in many cases it has been assumed to cover ignorance of a real date.

^c The four holy months, when peace reigned through Arabia, were the first, the seventh, the eleventh, the twelfth. Islam afterwards annulled the holy months as far as war with *unbelievers*.

^d Each family had its hermitage; that of Hashem, to which Mohammed belonged, was peculiarly disposed to

this kind of devotion.

^e Chadijah is represented as altogether ignorant of Gabriel; and it was only from the information she obtained from a relative (Warkeh ben Nussul), a learned Christian, that she learned the name and rank of the angel. Yet she is afterwards said to have been well acquainted with the Pentateuch and the Evangelists.

^f Tabari, as quoted by Vans Kennedy.—*Bombay Transactions*, iii. p. 421.

perpetually haunted his slumbers, and renewed his call. The incredulous Mohammed suspected that these were but the awful workings of insanity. His faithful wife consoled him with the praise of his virtues, which could not be so cruelly tried by God. Chadijah at length put these revelations to a singular and characteristic test. They were alone in their chamber when the figure appeared. Chadijah was sitting, as became a chaste matron, shrouded in her veil.⁵ She took the Prophet in her arms and said, "Dost thou now see it?" The Prophet said, "I do." She cast off her veil, her head and face were uncovered: "Dost thou now see it?" "I do not." "Glad tidings to thee, O Mohammed," exclaimed Chadijah, "it is not a divi, but an angel; for had it been a divi it would not have disappeared and respected my unveiled face." The visions became more frequent and distinct. At length, on the mountain of Hira, the angel stood before Mohammed in defined and almost human form. Mohammed, still suspecting his own insanity, fled to the summit of the mountain to cast himself headlong from it. The angel caught him under his wing, and as he reposed on his bosom commanded him to read. "I cannot read,"^h replied Mohammed. "Repeat then!" And the angel communicated to the Prophet the revelation of Islam.

⁵ There is a curious passage in Tertullian contrasting the modesty of the Arabian women of his day with the Christian virgins, who shamelessly showed their faces. "*Judicabunt nos Arabiae feminae ethnicae, quae non caput sed faciem quoque ita totam tegunt, ut uno oculo liberato contentae sint dimidiam frui lucem, quam totam faciem prostituere.*"—*De Virg. Vcl.* c. 17.

^h On the translation of these words depends the question whether Mohammed was absolutely illiterate. Those who deny it explain the phrase as confined to that which the angel then ordered him to read. Sprenger, p. 95, gives a different version: "but it is certain that no Mussulman will admit the sense which I give to these verses of the Korân."—Sprenger, 77, 111.

Mohammed on his return to his house related to his wife the personal appearance of the angel, and spoke of his mysterious communication. A short time after he lay down,¹ cold and weary, to repose. His wife had covered him. The angel again appeared. Mohammed's divine mission. "Arise, thou wrapped up." "Why should I arise?" "Arise and preach," said Gabriel; "cleanse thy garments. and flee every abomination." Mohammed imparted to his wife his *divine mission*. "I," said Chadijah, "will be the first believer." They knelt in the appointed attitude of prayer: by the command of Gabriel they performed their ablutions. The child Ali, but seven years old, beheld them, and inquired the reason of this strange conduct. Mohammed replied that he was the chosen prophet of God; that belief in Islam secured salvation in earth and heaven. Ali believed, and became the second of the faithful. Thus was Mohammed the prophet of his household.^k Slowly, however, did he win proselytes, even among his own kindred.^m Three years elapsed before the faith received the accession of Abubeker and of Othman, the future caliphs. Mohammed at length is accepted as the prophet of his family, of the noble and priestly house of Hashem. Abu Talib, his uncle, remains almost alone an unbeliever. And now Mohammed aspires to be the prophet of his *Tribe*.ⁿ That tribe, the Koreishite, was a

¹ On the subject of Mohammed's epilepsy, consult the long note of Dr. Weil, p. 42. It is difficult to resist the evidence which he adduces. Dr. Weil concludes: "I do not think, with Theophanes, that he alleged the apparition of Gabriel to conceal his malady, but that the malady itself was the cause of his belief in these apparitions."

^k Compare throughout Sprenger who arranges these events differently.

^m See on the slave converts, specially Zaid, Sprenger, 159.

ⁿ It was not till the fourth or fifth year after his own conversion that he came forth as a public preacher.—Sura xv. v. 94-99; Sale, ii. p. 75. Compare xxvi. p. 218. He preached on the hill Safa.

kind of hierarchy, exercising religious supremacy, and the acknowledged guardians of the Caaba, the sacred stone of Mecca, with its temple. The temple of the Caaba was at once, as is usual among Oriental nations, the centre of the commerce and of the religion of Arabia. Tradition, even in the days of Mohammed thought immemorial, had associated this holy place with the names of Adam, of Seth, and of Abraham; and worshippers from all quarters, idolaters who found each his peculiar idol, the Jew and the Christian, looked with awful reverence on this mysterious spot. The pilgrim of every creed, the merchant from every part of the peninsula, met at Mecca: almost all joined in the ceremonial of visiting the sacred mountain, kissing the black stone, approaching the holy well of Zemzem, each seven times, the mystic number with Arab as with Jew; and sacrifices were offered with devout prodigality. Arabian poetry hung up its most popular songs in the temple of the Caaba. It is not clear to what peculiar form of idolatry the Koreishite adhered, whether to the primitive and Arabian worship, which had enshrined in the temple of Caaba her three hundred and sixty deities; or to the later Tsabaism, a more refined worship of the planetary bodies.* But the intractable Koreish met him with contemptuous unbelief. They resisted the new prophet with all the animosity of an established priesthood trembling for their dignity, their power, and their wealth; they dreaded the superiority which would be assumed by the family of Hashem. In that family Abu

* The uncle of Mohammed, Abu Talib, was strenuous for the worship of two female deities, and the adoration of the "daughters of God" is reprobated in the Korân as one of the worst, probably therefore one of the most prevalent, forms of idolatry: compare Sprenger, 170, and the striking scene described by Muir from Hashäme, ii. p. 162.

Talib, though he resisted the doctrines, protected the person of Mohammed, as did all his kindred, except the implacable Abu Lahab. Like other hierarchies the Koreish had been tolerant only so long as they were strong. The eloquence, the virtue, the charity of Mohammed only made him more dangerous; his proselytes increased; the conversion of Hamza, another of his uncles, one of the most obstinate of unbelievers, drove them to madness. A price was set upon his secret assassination, a hundred camels and a ^{Persecution of Moham-} thousand ounces of silver. Omar, now twenty-six years med. old, undertook the deed.^p He was accosted on his way by the convert Nueim. "Ere thou doest the deed," said Nueim, "look to thine own near kindred." Omar rushed to the house of his sister Fatima, to punish her apostacy: he found some sentences of the Korân, he read them, and believed. Yet the Koreishites abated not in their hostility. The life of Mohammed was a struggle to enforce his creed on an obstinate and superstitious people; of threatened martyrdom for the unity of God and for his own prophetic mission. He was at length placed under a solemn interdict by the two ruling families of the Koreishites. Some of his humbler followers fled to Abyssinia, where they were protected by the sovereign of that land.^q Mohammed submitted to personal insult. He allowed himself to be abused, to be spit upon, to have dust thrown upon him, and to be dragged out of the temple by his own turban fastened to his neck: he beheld his followers treated with the same ignominy. At times his mind was so depressed as to need the consolations of the angel Gabriel. He

^p Weil, p. 59; Sprenger, 188.

^q Sprenger, p. 189. Compare throughout the new edition of Sprenger and Muir

constantly changed his bed to elude the midnight assassin. For three years Mohammed was under this interdict,^r dwelling in a castle of his uncle Abu Talib, situated in a deep and unassailable ravine, and came to Mecca only during the holy months.^s The death of Chadijah broke one of the prophet's ties to Mecca: that of Abu Talib, who died an unbeliever, left him only the valour and vigilance of his disciples to shield him against the implacable and deepening hatred of the Koreishites. The Prophet must fly from his native city; and the hopes of making Mecca the national religious metropolis, the centre of his new spiritual empire, seemed to have failed utterly and for ever. Miracle or craft alone saved him from the hands of his enemies, who surprised him, nearly alone, in the house of Abubeker. During his flight he only escaped assassination by the faithful

Flight.
Hegira.

Ali taking his place in the tent; and, so ran the legend, when he slumbered in a cave, the spider wove its web over the entrance, and a pigeon laid two eggs to show that its solitude had been undisturbed.^t

Medina (Yathrib^u) at once accepted the dignity which had been spurned by Mecca. Six of her most distinguished citizens had already embraced at Mecca the cause of the Prophet. The idolatry of Medina had not the local strength of that of Mecca; it had not the same strongly organised hierarchy. Some rivalry with

^r The interdict was suspended in the temple, according to Dr. Weil, in the seventh year of Mohammed's mission.

^s See Muir on Abu Talib, ii. 176, as also expedition to Tayef, pp. 198, &c.

^t Era of the Hegira or flight, April 19, 622. According to Caussin

de Perceval, the true date of Mohammed's flight from Mecca was the 18th or 19th June, 622.—iii. 17. Weil makes it 20th September. The question is, whether the intercalated year was in use at this time.

^u Yathrib now took the name of Medina (the city).—C. de P. iii. 21.

the commercial importance of Mecca, so closely connected with her religious supremacy, entered, no doubt, into the minds of the Medinese when they thus allied themselves with the chief of the new religion. The proselytes to Islam had prepared the whole city, and Mohammed did not leave Mecca till a deputation from Medina had sworn fealty to their new sovereign.* The form of the oath showed the Prophet under a new character. "If," said these Ansarii (the assistants), "we are slain in your cause, what is our reward?" "Paradise," replied the Prophet.†

In Medina appear manifest indications of more direct advances to the Jews. The Arabian Jews in the neighbourhood of the two great cities were numerous and powerful, formed whole tribes, occupied strong fortresses, and evidently, from the Talmudic character of the Korân, exercised a most extensive religious influence over the central part of Arabia. The wide-spread expectation of the Messiah among the Jews was mingled, no doubt, with the suggestive movements in the mind of Mohammed; and this fanaticism enlisted in his cause would have placed him at once at the head of a most formidable confederacy.‡ Jerusalem suddenly becomes

* This was the second or great oath of Acaba.—Caussin de Perceval, iii. 8.

† In the 2nd Sura, Mohammed appears to forbid all but defensive warfare: "And fight for the religion of God, against those who fight against you: but transgress not by attacking them first, for God loveth not the transgressors." He was as yet too weak for aggressive war.—Sur. ii. p. 34.

‡ Tabari, according to Col. Vans Kennedy, ascribes the ready acqui-

escence of the Medinese in the views of the Prophet to their fear lest they should be anticipated by their neighbours the Jews. On their return these men first recited the passages of the Korân which they had learned from Mohammed, and then said, "This is that Prophet whose name the Jews daily invoke, and whose coming they so anxiously expect: should they therefore receive him, and be obedient to him, you will be relieved to the greatest difficulties; it is

the centre of the Islamite system instead of Mecca; it is the Kiblah of all prayer. The Prophet is transported to its walls. His journey, to the more refined and spiritual minds, might appear to have taken place in a heaven-sent vision; to the ruder he was described as riding bodily on the mysterious horse El Borak, and alighting from his aërial voyage on the site of the temple of Jerusalem.^a

But the Jews repelled the overtures of the Prophet sprung from the race of Ismael. They scoffed at his pretensions, they provoked his terrible vengeance.^b Tribe after tribe was defeated; their castle-fastnesses could not sustain the assaults of the impetuous warriors who now went forth under the banner of Islam. First the Jews of Kainoka, then those of Al Nadhir, then those of Koraidha and of Khaibar were forced to submission. The remorseless massacre of the Koraidha

therefore expedient that you should hasten to anticipate the Jews, and receive Mohammed before they can unite with him." Bombay Trans. p. 430. Compare Caussin de Perceval, iii. 8.

^a On the Kiblah, see Korân, Sur. ii. p. 26-27, with Sale's note; Abulfeda, ch. xxvi.; Geiger, p. 19. A certain Imam says, that whilst Mohammed was in Mecca, he used the Caaba as his Kiblah, but whilst in Medina he used the holy house as his Kiblah, and there also made a general change; so that one period was abrogated by another. In a certain exposition it is said that he first prayed in Mecca towards the Caaba, and then changed to the Baitu i Mahaddos, which also his followers did at Medina for their pilgrimages, or even sacred processions:

but that afterwards the Kiblah was transferred to the Caaba. Hist. of the Temple of Jerusalem, by Jelal Addin al Jebal, translated by F. Reynolds.—Orient. Fund Translat. p. 109. Jelal Addin is disposed to glorify the temple at Jerusalem, but there is no reason to question his citations from early Mohammedan writers. See also Weil, p. 90. Sprenger, p. 123; he places it a year before the flight. Sprenger gives at some length the wild legend of the Borak, on which he rode not to Jerusalem, but to the Seven Heavens. The voyage was called the Nuraj, p. 126.

^b At different periods many Jews of note embraced Islamism: Waraka, the cousin of Chadijah, Halib ben Maleh, a Jewish prince, and Abdallah ib: Sallaam.—Geiger, page 24.

after the great battle of the Ditch, in which Mohammed watched the slaughter of seven hundred and ninety Jews in cold blood, whom the Korân pursues to the fires of hell, shows the implacable resentment of the Prophet.^c On other occasions the Prophet was not wanting in clemency; here his deliberate recklessness may be traced to the disappointment of high-wrought hopes.

At length, after a war of some years between the rival cities and the followers of the rival religions, after two bloody battles, that of Beder, ^{Progress of Islam.} in which the Mussulmans were victorious,^d that of Ohud, won by the Koreishites, after Medina had been twice besieged by the warriors of Mecca, and after a short truce, violated by the Koreishites, a sudden awe of Islam seized the obstinate unbelievers. In a few years an expedition, which at first bore the appearance of a peaceful pilgrimage and encountered but feeble resistance, made the Prophet master of Mecca.^e The Caaba opened its unresisting gates; the three hundred and sixty idols fell without resistance on the part of their worshippers. "The truth hath come, let lies disappear." They were dashed to pieces. The Mouedhin proclaimed from the roof, "There is one God, and Mohammed is his prophet." No contumacious voice is heard in denial. The conquest was almost without bloodshed, except that of a few from ^{11 Jan. 630.} old hereditary hostility. The most powerful of the

^c See in 'History of the Jews,' the successive wars with these Jewish tribes, v. iii. p. 93, 97. For their dates (some years intervened), compare Caussin de Perceval, vol. iii.

battle of Beder in Caussin de Perceval, iii. 49-65; of Ohud, 89-104: in this battle, Mohammed was wounded in the face, and in great danger.

^e VIII. of the Hegira.—Caussin de Perceval, iii. p. 21, &c.

^d See the vivid description of the

Prophet's adversaries became proselytes to the faith; the whole population swore allegiance. From that time Mecca becomes again the capital city of Islam; the divine edict in favour of Jerusalem is abrogated; the Prophet is sternly and exclusively Arabian; pilgrimages to the Caaba, now purified of its idols, become an essential part of the religion; the whole energy of Mohammedanism flows from and circulates back to the centre of the system.

Lord of Mecca, Mohammed stands supreme and alone; the Arabian mind and heart are his; the old idolatry has sunk at once before the fear of his arms and the sublimity of his new creed. He can disdain the alliance of those whom before he might stoop to conciliate; he can express hatred and contempt for the Jew and for the Christian, at least within the Arabian peninsula; he may pursue them with fierce and implacable hostility. But more than this, and herein is the great debt of gratitude which Arabia owes to Mohammed, the old hereditary feuds of the tribes and races are hushed in awe or turned into one impetuous current against the infidels. What on the whole was the influence of Mohammedanism on the world, we pause not now to inquire, or whether human happiness paid dear for the aggrandisement of the Arab race. But Arabia is now a nation; it takes its place among the nations of the earth; it threatens to become the ruling nation of the world.^f

^f See in Tabari, ii. 276-8; Ibn Khaldun, 194, the remarkable conversation attributed to Yezdegerd and the ambassadors of Omar: "Who are you to attack an empire? Of all the nations of the world, the poorest, most disunited, most ignorant, most stranger to the arts which are the

source of power and wealth." "What you have said of our poverty, our divisions, or barbarism, *was* true indeed." . . . The ambassador describes their misery, their superstition, their idolatry. "Such were we. Now we are a new people. God has raised up among us a man. . . . his envoy

It was the policy of Mohammed first to secure the absolute religious unity of Arabia. In Arabia Islam at once declares irreconcilable war with all forms of unbelief: they are swept away or retire into ignominious obscurity. The only dangerous antagonists of Mohammedanism after the death of Mohammed are rival prophets. Moseilama for a time seems to arrest or to divert the current of religious conquest. But even the religious unity of Arabia, much less that of the conquered world, dawns but by degrees upon the mind of Mohammed; his religious ambition expands with his success; his power is the measure of his intolerance; hence the strong contradictions in the Korân, the alternating tone of hatred and of tolerance, of contempt and of respect, with which are treated the authors and the votaries of other religions. He is a gentle preacher until he has unsheathed the sword;⁵ the sword once unsheathed is the one remorseless argument. The convenient principle of abrogation annuls all those sentences of the Korân which speak in a milder tone to unbelievers.^h At one time we find the broad principle of Eastern toleration explicitly avowed; the diversity of religion is ascribed to the direct ordinance, and all share in the equal favour of God.ⁱ

and true prophet. Islamism, his religion, has enlightened our minds, extinguished our hatreds, made us a society of brothers under laws dictated by divine wisdom. He has said, Consummate my work; spread the empire of Islam over the whole world; the earth is the Lord's, He has bestowed it on you."

^g There is a passage in the 29th Surâ (revealed at Mecca) commanding Islamites "to dispute mildly with

those who receive the Scriptures." But this verse is thought to be abrogated by the chapter of the Sword.—Compare Sale *in loco*.

^h This principle was early asserted in the Korân. "Whatever verse we shall abrogate or cause thee to forget, we shall bring a better than it, or one like unto it."—ch. ii, p. 21.

ⁱ "Surely those who believe, and those who Judaize, and Christians and Sabeans, whoever believeth in God

But the Korân gradually recants all these gentler sentences, and assumes the language of insulting superiority or undisguised aversion. Even in the Sura which contains the loftiest and most tolerant sentences, their spirit is abrogated by the repeated assertion that Jew and Christian have been alike unfaithful to their own law, and that the same disobedience which instigates them to rebel against their own religion is the cause of their unbelief in Islam.^k The Jews from the earliest ages had been the murderers of the prophets.^m The murder of the prophet Jesus is among their darkest crimes.

The Korân
becomes in-
tolerant.

To Jews.

What wonder that they now turn a deaf ear to the prophet Mohammed? They had falsified their scriptures; they had erased or perverted the predictions concerning Mohammed; they were enemies, therefore, to all true religion, and, as enemies, to be pursued with unmitigated enmity. They are guilty of a worse impiety (strange, no doubt, was the charge to their own ears), an infringement of the unity of God, which would demand the vengeance of

and the last day, and doth that which is right, they shall have their reward with their Lord; there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved."—ch. ii. p. 12. This and the parallel passage in the 5th chapter are said to be abrogated, or are explained by commentators whom Reland follows, as meaning that they will previously embrace Mohammedanism. But nothing less than abrogation can remove another passage: "Unto every one of you were given a law and an open path, and if God had pleased He had surely made you one people: but He hath thought fit to give you different laws, that He might try you in

that which He hath given you respectively. Therefore strive to equal each other in good works. Unto God shall ye all return, and then will He declare unto you that concerning which ye have disagreed."—ch. v. In another place is the broad axiom, "Let there be no violence in religion."—ch. ii. p. 48.

^k "Thou shalt surely find the most violent of all men in enmity against the true believers, to be the Jews and the idolaters."—ch. v. p. 147.

^m "They dislocate the words of the Pentateuch from their places, and have forgotten part of that which they were admonished."—ch. v. p. 131.

of all true believers. "They hold Ezra to be the Son of God."^a

Towards the Christians these early tolerant maxims of religious freedom were still further neutralised by the collision of the first principle of ^{To Christians.} Mohammedanism with that of the dominant Christianity. In one milder passage the Korân intimates that the Christians were less irreconcilable enemies to the Prophet than the Jew and the idolater, and this is attributed to the influence of the priests and the monks.^o The sense and the occasion of this sentence are manifest. The idolaters and Jews were in arms against the Prophet, and defending their religion with desperate valour. The only Christians with whom he had then come in contact were a peaceful people, probably monastic communities. But as its views and its conquests expand, in the Korân the worship of Christ becomes the worst impiety: the assertion of his divinity involves the guilt of infidelity.^p The worshipper of the Christian Trinity denied the unity of God, and however the contemptuous toleration of a mighty Mohammedan empire might give indulgence to such errors among the lower orders of its

^a Ch. ix. p. 243. Sale quotes one of the commentators (Al Beidawi), who says that this imputation must be true, because it was read to the Jews and they did not contradict it.

^o "Thou shalt surely find those among them to be the most inclinable to entertain friendship for the true believers who say, 'We are Christians.' This cometh to pass because there are priests and monks among them; and because they are not elated with pride."—ch. v. vol. i. p. 147.

^p "Verily Christ Jesus, the son of

Mary, is the apostle of God, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him. Believe, therefore, in God and His apostles, and say not there are three Gods: forbear this, it will be better for you. God is but one God. Far be it from Him that He should have a son. . . . Christ doth not proudly disdain to be a servant unto God neither the angels who approach near to his presence."—ch. iv. p. 126
Passages might be multiplied from almost every Sura.

subjects, the vital principles of the two religions stood opposed in stubborn antagonism. The Christian would not be soothed by the almost reverential admission of Jesus into the line of heaven-commissioned prophets, or even the respectful language concerning the Virgin Mary. The Mohammedan would not endure with patience the slightest imagined impeachment on the divine Unity. The rude and simple Arab had as yet no turn to or comprehension of metaphysical subtlety: he could not, or would not, conceive the Trinity but as three Gods.

It was indeed but a popular and traditionary Judaism,^a a popular and traditionary Christianity—neither the Judaism of the Law, nor the Christianity of the Gospel—which Mohammed encountered in Arabia. The Prophet may have exaggerated his own ignorance in order to heighten the great standing miracle of the faith, the composition of the exquisite and unrivalled Korân by an unlettered man.^r But throughout he betrays that he has no real knowledge either of the Old or New Testament: the fables blended up with the genuine Jewish history, though Talmudic, are not drawn from that great storehouse of Jewish learning, but directly from the vulgar belief.^s The Jews of Arabia had ever been held in contempt, and not without justice, by their more polished brethren of Babylon or Tiberias, as a rude and barbarous people; they had revolted back to old Arabian habits; they are said not even to be noticed in the Talmud.

The Prophet's notions of Christianity were from

^a Geiger, p. 29.

^r "Thou couldst not read any book before this, neither couldst thou write it with thy right hand; then had the

gainsayers justly doubted of the divine original thereof."—Sur. 29, ii. p. 250.

^s See the whole account of Moses in the 2nd Chapter.

equally impure sources, if, as no doubt they were, drawn from the vulgar creed of the Arabian Christians. They also must have dwelt apart, as well from the more rigid orthodoxy, as from the intellectual condition of the Church in the more civilised part of the world. They were Trinitarians, indeed, and at least almost worshippers of the Virgin Mary. They are distinctly charged with her deification.[†] But the spurious gospels of the Infancy[‡] and of Barnabas[§] contribute far more to the Christianity shown in the Korân than the writings of the Evangelists. Their Gnostic tendencies are shown by the Docetism[¶] or unreality of the Saviour's crucifixion, supposed by Mohammed to be the common belief of all Christians.[‡] To monastic Christianity Islam stood even in more direct opposition. Marriage in the Korân appears to be the natural state of man.[¶] Chastity, beyond a prudent temperance in connubial enjoyments and the abstinence from unlawful indulgences, is a virtue unknown in the Korân; it belongs neither to saints in earth nor in heaven. Even in the respect shown to the Virgin Mary she is spoken of, not under the appellation which sanctified her to Christian ears, but as the *mother*

* "And when God shall say unto Jesus at the last day, O Jesus, son of Mary! hast thou said unto men, Take me and my mother for two Gods, beside God? he shall answer, Praise be unto thee! it is not for me to say that which I ought not."—ch. v. i. p. 156.

† See in ch. xxx. the account of the birth of Christ. It is difficult to acquit Mohammed of confounding the Virgin Mary with Miriam the Prophetess, the sister of Moses.—vol. ii. p. 133.

‡ These works exist in Arabic in

more than one form. Compare Thilo, Codex Apoc. N. T.

¶ This Docetic notion was formed to favour the Gnostic (not the Catholic) view of the divinity of Christ.—Hist. of Christianity, ii. 61.

§ See the very curious extract from Tabari (Weil, die Chalifen, i. 103), on the substitution of a Jewish youth for Jesus on the Cross, and the ascension of Jesus to heaven.

¶ Mohammed was aware that the monastic system was later than Christianity. It was not ordained by God.—ch. lvii. p. 421.

of Jesus. The Korân admits none of the first principles of monasticism, or, rather, directly repudiates them. It disdains the Pantheistic system in all its forms; the Emanation theory of India, the Dualism of Persia, the Mysticism of monkery. God stands alone in his nature, remote, unapproachable; in his power dominant throughout all space and in all time, but divided by a deep and impassable gulf from created things. The absorption into, or even the approximation towards the Deity by contemplation in this life or perfection in the life to come, are equally foreign to the Korân. The later Sufism, which mingled this Orientalism with the religion of the Prophet, is more absolutely at variance with its original spirit, even than with that of the Gospel. Mohammed raised no speculative or metaphysical questions about the origin of evil: he took the world as it was, and denounced the vengeance of God against sin. To sin, angels, genii, and men were alike liable: they were to be judged at the final resurrection, and either condemned to one of the seven hells, or received into one of the seven heavens. And these seven hells and seven heavens are eternal, immutable. There is no re-absorption of the universe into the Deity. The external world and God will maintain throughout eternity the same separate, unmingling, unapproximating existence.

Such then was the new religion which demanded the submission of the world. As a sublime
Creed of Islam. Monotheism entitled to disdain the vulgar Polytheism of Arabia, of the remoter East, perhaps the Fire-worship of Persia, or even the depraved forms of Judaism and Christianity—yet at the highest it was but the republication of a more comprehensive Judaism; in all other respects its movement was retrograde. The

habits of the religion, if it may be so said, were those of the Old Testament, not of the New; the Arabs had hardly attained the point in civilisation at which the Jews stood in the time of the Mosaic dispensation.^b Mohammedanism triumphant over the world would have established the Asiatic form of Society: slavery and polygamy would have become the established usages of mankind.

Islamism recognises slavery to its fullest extent; it treats it as one of the ordinary conditions of society; none of the general principles tend even remotely to its extinction, or, except in the general admonitions to clemency and kindness, towards its mitigation. The Korân, as the universal revelation, would have been a perpetual edict of servitude.

Slavery.

Polygamy was the established usage of Arabia, and Mohammed limited, perhaps, rather than enlarged its privilege. The number of lawful wives is fixed, and with the permission of polygamy^c are mingled some wise and humane provisions against its evils.^d But as concubinage with female captives was recognised hardly with any limit, unbounded licence became the reward of brilliant valour, and the violation of women or the appropriation of all female

Polygamy.

^b There were some distinctive usages, which are said to have been studiously introduced in order to show aversion and contempt for the Jews.—Pocock, Not. Miscel. c. 9, p. 369; Geiger, p. 198. Of these the most important is the total abolition of the distinction of meats, with the exception of those prohibited to the Jewish converts to Christianity—that which died a natural death, blood, swine's flesh, and meat sanctified to idols.—Korân,

c. ii. p. 30, v. p. 128, vi. 181.

^c All other licence was forbidden. True believers keep themselves from carnal knowledge of any woman except their wives, or the captives which their right hands possess (for as to them they shall be blameless); but whoever coveteth any woman beyond these, they are transgressors.

^d The laws of divorce and of prohibited degrees, &c., are chiefly from the Old Testament.—ch. ii. and iv.

captives to the hareem became one of the ordinary laws of war.*

The Korân was a declaration of war against mankind. The world must prepare at once for a new barbarian invasion and for its first great universal religious war. This barbarian invasion was not, like that of the Teutons, the Huns, or even the later Monguls of the North and East, wave after wave of mutually hostile tribes driving each other upon the established kingdoms of the civilised world, all loose and undisciplined; it was that of an aggregation of kindred tribes, bound together by the two strong principles of organisation, nationality and religious unity. The Arab had been trained in a terrible school. His whole life was a life of war and adventure. The Arabians were a nation of marauders, only tempered by some commercial habits; the Arab was disciplined in the severest abstemiousness and endurance; bred in utter recklessness of human life. The old romance of Antares may show that the Arabs had already some of the ruder elements of chivalry—valour which broke out in the most extraordinary paroxysms of daring, the fervid and poetic temperament, the passion for the marvellous; their old

* The heaven-sanctioned indulgence of Mohammed in the violation of his own laws, by which he assumed and exercised a right to fifteen or more wives (the number is not quite certain), is perhaps not unjustly charged to the unbridled lust of the Prophet. Yet another at least concurrent cause may be suggested—the anxiety for male issue. Mohammed bitterly felt the death of his four sons by Chadijah, who died in their infancy; and that of one by Maria the Egyptian. This

was not only a fatal blow to his ambition, which doubtless would have led to the foundation of an hereditary religious dynasty, but was a reproach among his people, and threw some suspicion on his pre-eminent favour with God. Al-as Ebn Wayel, who was so cruel and so daring as to insult him on the loss of his favourite boy as “caudâ mutilus,” was accursed of heaven, and a special Sura (the 108th) was revealed to console the Prophet.—Abulfeda, c. lxvii., with Gagnier’s note.

poetry displays their congeniality both with the martial life and the amatory paradise opened by the Korân to true believers.^f For to all this was now superadded the religious impulse, the religious object, the pride of religious as of civil conquest. Religious war is the duty, the glory, assures the beatitude of the true believer. The last revealed chapter, the ninth, of the Korân, the legacy of implacable animosity bequeathed to mankind, has deepened to an unmitigated intenseness of ferocity. It directs the extermination of the idolaters of Arabia; it allows them four months for submission to the belief and to the rites of Islam; after that it commands them to be massacred without mercy, and proceeds after death to inflict on them an eternity of hell-fire.^g If the same remorseless extermination is not denounced against the Jew and the Christian, the true Islamite is commanded to fight against them till they are reduced to subjection and to the payment of tribute; while, to inflame the animosity of his followers, he repeats in the strongest terms what to their ears sounded not less odious than the charge of idolatry: against the Jew the worship of Ezra as the Son of God; against the Christian, not only that of Christ, but, in allusion no doubt to the worship of saints and martyrs, of their priests and monks.^h The wealth of the priests and monks is temptingly suggested, and their employment of it against true religion sentenced with a particularity which might warrant the

^f Antar, translated by Terrick Hamilton, Esq., *passim*. place."—ch. ix. p. 238. The works of these men are vain, and they shall remain.

^g "And when the months wherein ye are not allowed to attack them are passed, kill the idolaters wherever ye shall find them, and take them prisoners, and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient

^h They take their priests and their monks for their lords, besides God and Christ the son of Mary, although they are commanded to worship one God only.

most unscrupulous seizure of such ill-bestowed treasures.¹ The Islamites who stood aloof, either from indolence, love of ease, or cowardice, from the holy warfare, were denounced as traitors to God: the souls of more faithful believers were purchased by God: paradise was the covenanted price if they fought for the cause of God: whether they slay or be slain the promise is assuredly due. The ties of kindred were to be burst: the true believer was to war upon the infidel, whoever he might be; the idolater was even excluded from the prayers of the faithful.^k The sacred months were not to suspend the warfare against unbelievers. Victory and martyrdom are the two excellent things set before the believer. What may be considered the dying words, the solemn bequest of Mohammed to mankind, were nearly the last words of the last-revealed Sura: "O true believers! wage war against such of the infidels as are near you, and let them find severity in you, and know that God is with them that fear him."^m

Nevertheless, the Mohammedan invasions (and this was still more appalling to mankind) were by no means the inroads of absolute savages; not the outbursts of spoilers who wasted the neighbouring kingdoms and retired to their deserts, but those of conquerors governed by a determined policy of permanent subjugation. Not merely was the alternative of Islamism or tribute to be

¹ Dante might have borrowed some of these phrases. "In the day of judgment their treasures shall be intensely heated in the fire of hell, and their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be stigmatised therewith; and their tormentors shall say, This is what ye have treasured up for your souls; take therefore that

which ye have treasured up."—ch. ix. p. 244.

^k "It is not allowed unto the Prophet, nor those who are true believers, that they pray for idolaters, although they be of them, after it is become known unto them that they are inhabitants of hell." — ch. ix. p. 252.

^m Ch. ix. p. 263.

offered, and unbelievers beyond the bounds of Arabia allowed to capitulate on these milder terms, but even their war-law contained provisions which, while they recognised the first principles of humanity, showed that the invaders intended to settle as masters in the conquered territories. After victory they were to abstain from indiscriminate carnage,^a from that of children, of the old, and of women; they were to commit no useless or vindictive ravage; to destroy no fruit or palm trees; to respect the corn fields and the cattle. They were to adhere religiously to the faith of treaties. Their conduct to the priests or ministers of an opposite religion was more questionable and contradictory. The monks who remained peacefully in their convents were to be respected and their buildings secured from plunder. But, as if conscious of the power of fanaticism in themselves, they wisely dreaded its reaction through the despair, and it might be, heroic faith of the priesthood. Towards them the war-law speaks in a sterner tone, though even they are not excluded from the usual terms of capitulation. "Another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, that have shaven crowns, be sure you cleave their skulls and give them no quarter till they either turn Mohammedan or pay tribute."^o

Mohammed himself, if we are to trust the tradition preserved by the best Arabian historians, had not only vaguely denounced war against mankind in the Korān, but contemplated, at least remotely, vast and unlimited conquests. The vision of the great Arabian empire had dawned upon his mind.^p Already, even before the

^a "When ye encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads, until ye have made a great slaughter among them; and bind them in bonds; and either give them a free dismission afterwards, or exact a ransom until

the war shall have laid down its arms."—ch. xlvii. ii. 376.

^o The instructions of Abubeker to the Syrian army, in Ockl'y, vol. i. p. 22.

^p In the 7th year of the Hegira.

conquest of Mecca, he had summoned, not only the petty potentates of the neighbouring kingdoms, but the two great powers of the more civilised world, the king of Persia and the emperor of the East, to submit to his religious supremacy. His language, indeed, was courteous, and only invited them to receive the creed of Islam. If there be any foundation for this fact, which was subsequently embellished with mythic fiction, it might seem that the Prophet, either despairing of the subjugation of his intractable countrymen, had turned his mind to foreign conquest; or that he hoped to dazzle the yet hostile Arabs into his great national and religious confederacy by these magnificent pretensions to universal sovereignty. The neighbouring princes replied in very different language. The governor of Egypt, Mokawkas, treated the mission with great respect, and sent, among many valuable presents, two beautiful girls, one of whom, Mary, became a special favourite. The king of Bahrein, Mondar Ebn Sawa, embraced Islam with almost all his people. The king of Ghassan, Al Harith Ebn Ali Shawer, answered, that he would go himself to Mohammed. For this supposed menace the Prophet imprecated a curse on that kingdom. A more fearful malediction was uttered against Hawdka Ebn Ali, king of Yemen, who had apostatised back from Islamism to Christianity, and returned a contemptuous answer. The Prophet's curse was fulfilled in the speedy death of the king. The king of Persia received with indignant astonishment this invitation from an obscure Arabian adventurer to yield up the faith of his ancestors. He tore the letter and scattered the fragments. "So," said the Prophet, "shall his empire be torn to pieces."¹ The Moham-

¹ Later Arabian poetry is full of the birth of Mohammed foreshadowed the omens and prophecies which at the fall of the Persian empire. The palace

medan tradition of Persia still points out the scene of this impious rejection of the Prophet's advances.^r The account of the reception of the Prophet's letter by the emperor Heraclius bears still stronger marks of Arabian fancy. He is said to have treated it with the utmost reverence, placed it on his pillow, and nothing but the dread of losing his crown prevented the Roman from embracing the faith of Islam. A strange but widespread Jewish tradition contrasts strongly with this view of the character of Heraclius. A vision had warned the Emperor that the throne of Byzantium would be overthrown by a circumcised people.^s So ignorant was Heraclius of any people so distinguished, but the Jews, that he commenced a violent persecution of the race, and persuaded the kings of France and Spain to join in his merciless hostility to the Israelites.

The Korân itself, the only trustworthy authority as to the views of Mohammed, shows that he watched not without anxiety the strife which, during his own rise, was raging between the Roman and the Persian empires. He rejoiced in the unexpected discomfiture of the Persians, who under Khoosroo Purveez seemed rising to a

of the sovereign fell, the holy fires went out, and a seer uttered a long poetic prediction concerning the final ruin of the race and empire of Chosroes. — Abulfeda, Vit. Moham. c. i. p. 3, &c.

^r Khoosroo Purveez was encamped on the banks of the Karasoo river when he received the letter of Mohammed. He tore the letter, and threw it into the Karasoo. For this action the moderate author of the *Zeenut ul-Tuarih* calls him a wretch, and rejoices in all his subsequent misfortunes. These misdeeds still exist.

"I remarked to a Persian, when encamped near the Karasoo, in 1800, that the banks were very high, which must make it difficult to apply its waters to irrigation." "It once fertilised the whole country," said the zealous Mohammedan, "but its channel shrunk with horror from its banks, when that madman, Khoosroo, threw our holy Prophet's letter into the stream; which has ever since been accursed and useless." — Malcolm's Persia, vol. i. p. 126.

^s See Hist. of Jews, iii. p. 102. compare Basnage and Jost.

height of power formidable to the independence of the East, and fatal to the extension of his own meditated empire. The Greeks like the Mohammedans, people of the Book, were less irreconcilably opposed to Islam than the Persians, whom they held to be rank idolaters.* Persia, when Mohammed was assuming the state of an independent prince in Medina, was the threatening and aggressive power. Syria, Jerusalem itself, had been wrested from the Roman empire; and Syria and Jerusalem were the first conquests which must pave the way for an Arabian empire. Before the death of Mohammed they had been reconquered by Heraclius, who seemed suddenly to have revived the valour and enterprise of the Roman armies. The Roman empire, therefore, was the first and only great foreign antagonist encountered by the Islamites during the life of the Prophet. The event was not promising: in the battle of Muta some of the bravest of the followers of the Prophet had fallen;† the desperate valour and artifice of Khaled, the Sword of God, and the panic of the Roman army, had with difficulty retrieved the day. The war of Tabuc, for which Mohammed made such threatening preparations, ended in failure and disappointment. The desert seemed to protect the Roman empire on this first invasion from the sons of the desert.‡

* Ch. xxx. p. 253. Entitled the Greeks, or al Rum. It announces the defeat of the Greeks by the Persians, and prophesies the final victory of the Greeks. † Abulfeda, ch. xlv.

‡ Abulfeda, ch. lvii.; Gagnier, l. vi. ch. xi. Gibbon describes this war with spirited brevity. Korân, 9. The Moslems were discouraged by the heat. "Hell is much hotter," said the in-

dignant Prophet. "Les Musulmans s'avancent vers la Syrie; tout à coup le Prophète reçoit du ciel l'ordre de faire halte. Il revient à Medinah, et la raison de ce mouvement rétrograde n'a jamais été bien expliquée."—Oelsner, Des Effets de la Religion de Mohammed, p. 43. Oelsner supposes the progress of the rival Prophet Moseilama to have been the cause.

CHAPTER II.

Successors of Mohammed.

THE death of Mohammed * appeared at first the signal for the dissolution of the great Arabian confederacy. The political and religious empire might seem to have been built on no solid foundation. The death of the Prophet could not but be a terrible blow to the faith of the believers. He had never, indeed, pretended to any exemption from the common lot of mortality. He had betrayed his suspicions that he had been poisoned by a Jewish woman. His death had nothing majestic or imposing. It was caused by a fever, and at times his mind wandered. The accounts as to his firmness or feebleness in his last hour are very discrepant. He was said, on one hand, to have edified his followers by an appeal to his own severe justice and virtue. He was prepared to redress wrong : to make restitution for any injustice committed during his life. He actually did make restitution of three drachms of silver claimed by some humble person from whom he had withheld them wrongfully. But his impatience under suffering moved the wonder, almost the contempt, of his wife Ayesha. Such weakness he had rebuked in a woman. The

* June 7 or 8, 632. Compare, however, Weil, *Leben Mohammed*, 351, and *Geschichte der Chaliphen*, i. p. 2 ; also p. 16, and note p. 15. He ascribes to Abubeker the publication of the verses which declared the Prophet mortal. This work of Dr. Weil as summing up, with the same careful industry as in his *Life of Mohammed*, the labours of all his predecessors, will be among my chief authorities in the few following pages.

Prophet excused himself by declaring that God afflicted him with anguish poignant in the proportion with which he had distinguished him by glory above all mankind.^b At the death of Mohammed it might seem that, the master-hand withdrawn, all would return to the former anarchy of tribal independence and of religious belief.^c

His death, on the contrary, after but a short time, was the signal of the most absolute unity ; of a concentrated force, which first controlling all the antagonistic elements of disunion in Arabia, poured forth in one unbroken torrent on the world. The great internal schism as to the succession to the caliphate, the proud inheritance of the Prophet, was avoided until Mohammedanism was strong enough to bear the division, which might have been fatal at an earlier period. The rightful heir, the heir whose succession was doubtless intended by the Prophet, and more or less distinctly declared, was set aside ; and yet no dissension, at least none fatal to the progress of their arms, paralysed the counsel or divided the hearts of the Islamites. Three caliphs, Abubeker, Omar, Othman, ascended, in due order, the sacred throne, and organised the first foreign conquests of Islam. Those first foreign conquests, Syria, Persia, Egypt, part of Africa, were achieved before the fierce conflict for the caliphate between Ali and Moawija. It is impossible not to admire the singular beauty of the character of Ali. Three times on the point of ascending the throne, each time supported by a formidable host of followers, each time he was supplanted through the boldness or the intrigues of the more turbulent chieftains, each time he submitted with grace and dignity to

^b Price, History of Mohammedanism, i. p. 13.

^c See on the vain attempt of the Medinese to wrest the succession from the Koreishites, Weil, i. 3.

the exclusion,^d remained strenuously faithful to the cause, repressed the ambition in which he was by no means wanting, condescended to the condition and zealously discharged the duties of a loyal subject. This he did though the nearest male relation of the Prophet, the son of his uncle, and the husband of a violent woman, the Prophet's daughter, and the father of sons who might have looked forward to the great inheritance.^e The tragedy of the death of these sons casts back even a more powerful interest on the gentle but valiant Ali.^f

Never was disunion so perilous to the cause of Mohammedanism; never would a contested succession have produced such disastrous consequences. The dangerous swarm of rival prophets were multiplying in different parts of Arabia; it required the collective force of Islam to crush them; but they fell before the arms and the authority of the caliphs. Moseilama, the most formidable of all, whose extraordinary influence, subtlety, and valour, seemed at one time to balance the rising fortunes of Mohammedanism, to render it doubtful under the banner of which religion, that of Moseilama or of Mohammed, would go forth the great Arab invasion of the civilised world, lost at length his power and his life before the Sword of God, the intrepid Khaleel.^g The effect of this,

^a Dr. Weil seems to think not so willingly, on the first submission, i. p. 6; on the last, p. 153-155. Ali, by general tradition, is exculpated from all share in the murder of Othman. Dr. Weil is throughout very unfavourable to Ali.

^e Ali, during the lifetime of Fatima the Prophetess, took no second wife: he had altogether fifteen sons and eighteen daughters.—Weil, p. 253.

^f Hasan and Hussein. Dr. Weil,

pitilessly critical, is dead to all the pathetic circumstances of the death of Hussein. Even Tabari's striking account he throws into a note.—p. 317.

^g Dr. Weil treats the intrigue of Moseilama with the Prophetess Ladjah and the obscene verses quoted with such coarse zest by Gibbon, as fictions of the Mussulman. Moseilama was then 100, if not 150, years old. I confess the latter sounds to me most like fiction.—On Moseilama, pp. 21-26.

no doubt, was not merely to suppress these hostile sects, but to centre the enthusiasm, which was now burning in diverging lines, into one fiery torrent; to crowd the ranks of Islam with new warriors, who had joined it rather from the restless love of enterprise than from any strong conviction as to the relative truth of either creed, and were ready to transfer their allegiance, as success and glory were the only true tests of the divine favour, to the triumphant cause. They became at once earnest and zealous proselytes to a religion which actually bestowed such higher successes upon earth, and promised rewards, guaranteed by such successes, in the life to come. Soldiers, marauders by birth and habit, they had become followers of either prophet by the accidents of local or tribal connexion, by the excitement of the imagination and the passion of sect. Their religion was a war-cry, and so that it led to conquest they cared little what name it might sound.¹

That war-cry was now raised against all who refused faith or tribute to the creed and to the armies of the Caliph. The first complete foreign conquest of Moham-medanism was Syria, the birthplace of Christianity. Palestine, the hallowed scene of the Saviour's life and death, was wrested by two great battles,¹ and by the sieges of a few great cities, Bosra, Damascus, and Jerusalem, from the domain of Christendom. It was an easy conquest, fearfully dispiriting to the enemies of Islam, to the believers the more intoxicating, as revealing their irresistible might: the more it baffled calculation the more it appalled the defeated, and made

¹ For the wars of Khaled in Persia under Abubeker, see Weil, 31 *et seq.*

p. 40, note. Jarmuk, after the death of Abubeker, August 22, 634.—Weil, 46, probably the following day, Aug. 23.

¹ Adjnadein, July 30, 634.—Weil,

those who found themselves invincible, invincible indeed. On the one side had at first appeared numbers, discipline, generalship, tactics, arms, military engines, the fortifications of cities ; on the other, only the first burst of valour, which from its very ignorance despised those advantages. The effete courage of the Roman legionaries had been strengthened by the admission of barbarians into their ranks ; and the adventurous campaigns of Heraclius against the Persians had shown that the old intrepidity of the Roman armies was not quite worn out, and under a daring and skilful general might still be aggressive as well as defensive. But now the Emperor and the armies seem alike paralysed by the suddenness and impetuosity of the Arab movements. The Emperor stands aloof, and does not head his armies. The armies melt away before the uncontrollable onset of the new enemies. At Adjnadein and at Jarmuk the slaughter of the Roman armies was counted by tens of thousands, that of the Mohammedans hardly by hundreds. But it was the religious impulse which made the inequality of the contest. Religious warfare had not yet become a Christian duty ; it atoned for no former criminality of life ; it had no promise of immediate reward ; it opened not instantaneously the gate of heaven. The religious feeling might blend itself with patriotism and domestic love. The Christian might ardently desire to defend the altar of his God, as well as the freedom of his country and the sanctity of his household hearth. But, even if the days of heroic martyrdom were not gone by, the martyrs whose memory he worshipped had been distinguished by passive endurance rather than active valour. The human sublimity of the Saviour's character consisted in his suffering. According to the monastic view of Christianity, the

total abandonment of the world, with all its ties and duties, as well as its treasures, its enjoyments, and objects of ambition, advanced rather than diminished the hopes of salvation. Why should they fight for a perishing world, from which it was better to be estranged? They were more highly purified by suffering persecution than by triumphing over their adversaries. It is singular, indeed, that while we have seen the Eastern monks turned into fierce undisciplined soldiers, perilling their own lives and shedding the blood of others without remorse, in assertion of some shadowy shade of orthodox expression, hardly anywhere do we find them asserting their liberties or their religion with intrepid resistance. Hatred of heresy was a more stirring motive than the dread or the danger of Islamism. After the first defeats the Christian mind was still further prostrated by the common notion that the invasion of the Arabs was a just and heaven-commissioned visitation for their sins. Submission was humble acquiescence in the will of God; resistance a vain, almost an impious, struggle to avert inevitable punishment. God was against them; hereafter he might be propitiated by their sufferings, but now (such was their gloomy predestinarianism) they were doomed to drink the lees of humiliation.

On the other hand, the young fanaticism of the Musulman was constantly fed by immediate promises and immediate terrors. He saw hell with its fires blazing behind him if he fled, paradise opening before him if he fell.^k The predestined was but fulfilling his fate,

^k The exhortation of the generals was brief and forcible (at the battle of Jarmuk): "Paradise is before you; the devil and hell-fire in your rear."—Gibbon, c. xli. ix. 405.

accomplishing the unalterable will of God, whether in death or victory. God's immutable decree was the guardian of his unassailable life, or had already appointed his inevitable death. The battle-cry of Khaled, the Sword of God, was "Fight, fight! Paradise! Paradise!" "Methinks" (cried the youthful cousin of Khaled in the heat of battle) "I see the black-eyed girls looking upon me, one of whom, if she should appear in this world, all mankind would die for the love of her. And I see in the hand of one of them a handkerchief of green silk, and a cap made of precious stones, and she beckons me, and calls out, Come hither quickly, I love thee!"^m Contrast this as a motive to the heart of a ruder, a grosser race, with the Christian's calm, vague, trembling anticipations of a beatitude, in which that which was most definite was exemption from the sorrows and sins of life, the companionship of saints and martyrs, or even of the Redeemer himself; or perhaps some indistinct vision of angelic presence, sweet and solemn but unimpassioned music, a wilderness of dazzling light.

But Christianity did not even offer a stubborn passive resistance.ⁿ The great cities, which in the utter inexperience of the Arabs in the art of siege, might have been expected to be inexpugnable, except by famine, fell one after another; Bosra, Damascus,

^m Ockley, i. p. 267.

ⁿ The complete conquest of Syria occupied about five years.—Weil, i. 82. Abubeker's instructions to the first army which invaded Christian Syria were in these terms: "Fight valiantly. . . . Mutilate not the vanquished; slay not old men, women, or children; destroy not palm-trees; burn not

fruit-trees; kill not cattle, but for food. You will find men in solitude and meditation, devoted to God: do them no harm. You will find others with their heads tonsured, and a lock of hair upon their shaven crowns; them smite with your sabres, and give them no quarter."—Caussin de Perceval, iii. 343.

Jerusalem became Mohammedan. The first great conquest, before either of the decisive battles which lost Syria, showed that the religion as well as the arms of Islam was formidable to Christendom. The strong city of Bosra fell not merely by an act of treachery, but of apostacy, and that in no less a person than the governor, the base Romanus. In the face of the people, thus reduced to the yoke of the Saracens, the unblushing renegade owned his treason. He reproached the Christians as enemies of God, because enemies of his apostle; he disclaimed all connexion with his Christian brethren in this world or the next, and he pronounced his new creed with ostentatious distinctness. "I choose God for my Lord, Mohammedanism for my religion, the temple of Mecca for the place of my worship, the Mussulmans for my brethren, and Mohammed for my prophet and apostle."

At Damascus the valiant Thomas, who had assumed
Fall of
Damascus. the command of the city, attempted to counter the fanaticism of the Mussulmans by awakening as strong fanaticism on his own side. The crucifix was erected at the gate from which Thomas issued forth to charge the enemy. The bishop with his clergy stood around, the New Testament was placed near the crucifix. Thomas placed his hand on the book of peace and love, and solemnly appealed to Heaven to decide the truth of the conflicting religions. "O God, if our religion be true, deliver us not into the hands of our enemies, but overthrow the oppressor. O God, succour those which profess the truth and are in the right way."° The prayer was interpreted by the apostate Romanus to Serjabil, the Mohammedan general.

° Ockley, i. 87.

"Thou liest, thou enemy of God; for Jesus is of no more account with God than Adam. He created him out of the dust, and made him a living man, walking upon the earth, and afterwards raised him to heaven." But Christianity in the East was not yet a rival Mohammedanism; it required that admixture of the Teutonic character which formed chivalry, to combat on equal terms with the warriors of the Korân. Latin Christianity alone could be the antagonist of the new faith. The romantic adventure of Jonas the Damascene, who to save his life abandoned his religion, in his blind passion led the conquering Moslems in pursuit of the fugitives from Damascus, and was astonished that his beloved Eudocia spurned with contempt the hand of a renegade, may suggest that Christianity had no very strong hold on many of the bravest of the Roman soldiers.^p

The capitulation of Jerusalem shows the terms imposed by the conqueror on his subjects who refused to embrace Islamism, and the degraded state to which the Christians sank at once under the Mohammedan empire. The characteristic summons of the city was addressed to the chief commanders and inhabitants of Ælia. If they admitted at once the unity of God, that Mohammed was the Prophet of God, and the resurrection and the last judgement, then it would be unlawful for the Mohammedans to shed their blood or violate their property. The alternative was tribute or submission; "otherwise I shall bring men against you who love death better than you do the drinking of wine or eating hog's-flesh."^q He declared that he

Of Jerusalem.
A.D. 636.

^p This story, the subject of Hughes's
Siege of Damascus, is told at length
by Ockley and Gibbon: Dr. Weil treats

it as fiction.

^q Ockley, from the author of the
History of the Holy Land.

would not leave the walls till he had slain the garrison and made slaves of the people. During four months Jerusalem held out in gallant resistance; even then it refused to surrender but to the Caliph in person. The sternly frugal Omar arrived before the walls. On the part of the Romans the negotiation was conducted by the Bishop Sophronius; and Sophronius was constrained to submit to the humiliating function of showing the Holy Places of the city to the new Lord of Jerusalem;^r to point out the site of the temple in order that the Caliph might erect there his stately mosque for the worship of Islam. In the secret bitterness of his heart the bishop said, "Now indeed is the abomination of desolation in the Holy of Holies."

By the terms of the treaty the Christians sank at once to an inferior and subject people,^s Christianity to a religion permitted to exist by the haughty disdain of the conqueror; it submitted to the ignominy of toleration. Christianity was to withdraw from the public gaze, to conceal itself in its own modest sanctuary, no longer to dazzle the general mind by the pomp of its processions or the solemnity of its services.^t The sight of the devout Mussulman was not to be offended by the symbols of the faith; the cross was no

^r The Arabian traditions mention various artifices of Sophronius to divert Omar from the real holy place, but its true site had been described by the Prophet to Omar. The Prophet had seen it, as will be remembered, in his mysterious journey. One curious account states that Omar crept on his hands and knees till he came to the great sewer. He then stood upright, and proclaimed it to be the place described by the Prophet. — Hist. of

Temple of Jerusalem, p. 176.

^s The capitulation is in the History of the Temple, above cited. It is quoted from the work of Abderrahman Ibn Tamin. It pretends that these were terms submitted of their own accord by the Christians, but the language of the conquering Mussulman is too manifest.

^t They were not publicly to exhibit the associating religion, that is, which associated other gods with the one God.

longer to be exhibited on the outside of the churches. The bells were to be silent; the torches no longer to glitter along the streets. The Christians were to wail their dead in secresy; they were, at the same time, though their ceremonies were not to be insulted by profane interruption, not to enjoy the full privilege of privacy. Their churches were at all times to be open, if the Mussulman should choose to enter; but to attempt to convert the Mussulman was a crime. They were interdicted from teaching their children the Korân, lest, no doubt, it should be profaned by their irreverent mockery; even the holy language (the Arabic) was prohibited: they were not to write or engrave their signet-rings with Arabic letters.

The monasteries were allowed to remain, and the Mussulman exacted the same hospitality within those hallowed walls which was wont to be offered to the Christian. The monks were to lodge the wayfaring Mussulman, as other pilgrims, for three nights and give him food. No spy was to be concealed in church or monastery.

The whole people was degraded into a marked and abject caste. Everywhere they were to honour the Mussulmans, and give place before them. They were to wear a different dress; not to presume to the turban, the slipper, or girdle, or the parting of the hair. They were to ride on lowly beasts, with saddles not of the military shape. The weapons of war were proscribed the sword, the bow, and the club. If at any time they carried a sword, it was not to be suspended from the girdle. Their foreheads were to be shaved, their dress girt up, but not with a broad girdle. They were not to call themselves by Mussulman names; nor were they

to corrupt the abstemious Islamite by selling wine; nor possess any slave who had been honoured by the familiarity of a Mussulman. Omar added a clause to protect the sanctity of the Mussulman's person, it was a crime in a Christian to strike a Mussulman.

Such was the condition to which the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem fell at once; nearly the same terms, no doubt, were enforced on all the Christians of Syria. For neither Antioch nor Aleppo, nor any of the other great towns, made any vigorous or lasting resistance. The Emperor Heraclius withdrew his troops and abandoned the hopeless contest. Syria, from a province of the Roman empire, became a province of Islamism, undisturbed by any serious aggression of the Christians till the time of the Crusades.

The Christian historian is not called upon to describe the Mohammedan conquest of Persia. The religion of the fire-worshippers, and the throne of the Sassanian dynasty, occupied the arms of the Mohammedans less than twenty years. Yezdegird, the last of the Sassanians, perished in his flight by an ignoble hand. The Caliph was master of all the wealth, the territory, and the power of that Persian kingdom which had so long contested the East with the Byzantine empire.

At the same time the tide of conquest was flowing westward with slower but as irresistible force.^a In less than three years the Saracens were masters of Egypt. Egypt fell an easy prey, betrayed by the internal hostility of the conflicting Christian sects.

^a The invasion of Amrou is dated June, 638; the capture of Alexandria, December 22, A.D. 640 (641, Weil).

The Monophysite religious controversy had become a distinction not of sect only but of race. The native Egyptian population, the Copts, were stern Monophysites: the Greeks, especially those of Alexandria, adhered to the Council of Chalcedon. Mokawkas, by his name a native Egyptian, had attained to great power and influence; he is called Governor of Egypt under Heraclius. Mokawkas, according to the tradition, had been among the potentates summoned by Mohammed himself to receive the doctrine of Islam. He had returned a courteous refusal, accompanied with honourable gifts. Now, on the principle that religious hatred is more intense against those who differ the least in opinion, Mokawkas and the whole Coptic population, perhaps groaning under some immediate tyranny, preferred to the rule of those who asserted two natures in Christ, that of those who altogether denied his divinity. They acquiesced at once in the dominion of Amrou; they rejoiced when the proud Greek city of Alexandria, the seat of the tyrannical patriarch, who would enforce upon them the creed of Chalcedon, fell before his arms; they were only indignant that the contemptuous toleration of the Mohammedans was extended as well to those who believed in the two natures, as to those who adhered to the Monophysitic creed.*

The complete subjugation of Africa was less rapid; it was half a century before the fall of Carthage. The commencement of the eighth Of Africa.
647 to 698. century saw the Mohammedans masters of the largest and most fertile part of Spain. Latin Christianity has lost the country of Cyprian and Augustine; the number of extinguished bishoprics is almost countless.

* Compare Weil, p. 105-114.

The splendour of these triumphs of the Mohammedan arms has obscured the progress of the Mohammedan religion. In far less than a century, not only has the Caliph become the sovereign, but Islamism the dominant faith in Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and part of Spain.⁷ But how did the religion, though that of the ruling power, become that of the subject people? In Arabia alone the Korân had demanded the absolute extirpation of all rival modes of belief, of Judaism and Christianity, as well as of the older idolatries. Though vestiges both of Judaism and Christianity might remain, to Omar is attributed the glory of having fulfilled the Prophet's injunctions. But the earlier conquests do not seem, like those of a later period, that of the Ghaznevides in India, and of the Turks in Europe, the superinduction of an armed aristocracy in numbers comparatively small; of a new and dominant caste into an old society, which in the one case remained Brahminical or Buddhist, in the other Christian. Mohammedanism in most of the conquered countries becomes the religion of the people. In Persia the triumph of the religion was as complete as that of the arms. The faithful worshippers of fire, the hierarchy of Zoroaster, dwindled away, and retired either into the bordering and more inaccessible districts, or into India. On the south of the Caspian, on Mount Elbourz, the sacred fire continued to burn in solitary splendour, after it had been extinguished or had expired on the countless temples, which, under the Sassanian dynasty, had arisen from the Tigris nearly to the Indus. The sacred books of Zoroaster, or at least those of the revived Zoroastrianism under Ardeschir Babhegan, were preserved

Progress of
Mohammed-
anism.

⁷ Ockley, vol. i. p. 318.

by the faithful communities, who found an hospitable reception in India. Soon after the conquest the followers of Magianism seem to have become so little dangerous, that the Caliphs gave to them the privilege of the same toleration as to the Christians and Jews: they became what the Korân denied them to be, a third people of the Book. The formation of a new national language, the modern Persian, from the admixture of the old native tongue with the Arabic, shows the complete incorporation of the two races, who have ever since remained Mohammedan.

But in the countries wrested from Christianity the case was different. With the remarkable exception of Northern Africa, perhaps of Southern Spain, Christianity, though in degradation and subjection, never ceased to exist. There was no complete change wrought like the slow yet total extinction of Paganism in the Roman world by Christianity. In all the Christian countries, in Syria, and other parts of Asia, and in Egypt, of the three fearful alternatives offered by the Arabian invader—Islam, the sword, or tribute—the Christians, after a vain appeal to the sword, had quietly acquiesced in the humiliating tribute. They had capitulated on the payment of a regular poll-tax, and that not a very heavy one, imposed on the believers in every religion but that of the Korân. So the Nestorian and Jacobite Christians in Persia and Syria, the Copts in Egypt, and a few waning communities for a certain time even in Africa, maintained their worship. Still the relative numbers of the Mohammedans increased with great rapidity. But as, for the achievement of these immense conquests, spread over so vast a surface, the Arabian armies must have been very inconsiderable (little confidence can be placed in the statement of numbers in Oriental writers), so also

looking, in a general way, to the population of Arabia, and supposing that the enthusiasm of conquest and religion swept forth a very large part of it in these armed migrations to foreign lands, they must have borne but a small proportion to the conquered races. In most countries the Arabic language became not merely that of the state, but of the people.

Our information is singularly deficient as to this silent revolution in the Christian part of the Mohammedan conquests. We have seen, though not so distinctly, perhaps, as we might wish, primitive Christianity gradually impregnating the mind and heart of the Roman world; the infant communities are found settling in all the great cities, and gradually absorbing into themselves a large portion of the people; minds of all orders, orators, philosophers, statesmen, at length emperors, surrender to the steady aggression of the Gospel. In some cases may be traced the struggles of old religious belief, the pangs and throes of the spiritual regeneration. We know the arguments which persuaded, the impulses which moved, the hopes and fears which achieved, the religious victory.

But the moral causes, and moral causes there must have been, for the triumph of Islamism, are Causes. obscure. altogether obscure and conjectural. Egypt has shown how the mutual hostility of the Christians advanced the progress of the Mohammedan arms; it is too probable that it advanced likewise the progress of the Mohammedan faith. What was the state of the Christian world in the provinces exposed to the first invasion of Mohammedanism? Sect opposed to sect, clergy wrangling with clergy upon the most abstruse and metaphysical points of doctrine. The orthodox, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, the Jacobites, were perse-

cutting each other with unexhausted animosity; and it is not judging too severely the evils of religious controversy to suppose that many would rejoice in the degradation of their adversaries under the yoke of the unbeliever, rather than make common cause with them in defence of their common Christianity. In how many must this incessant disputation have shaken the foundations of their faith! It had been wonderful if thousands had not, in their weariness and perplexity, sought refuge from these interminable and implacable controversies in the simple, intelligible truth of the Divine Unity, though purchased by the acknowledgment of the prophetic mission of Mohammed.

Mohammed, when he sanctioned one of the old Arabian usages, Polygamy, foresaw not how powerful an instrument this would be for the dissemination of his religion. This usage he limited, indeed, in the Korân, but claimed a privilege in himself of extending to the utmost. His successors, and most of the more wealthy and powerful Mohammedans, assumed the privilege and followed the example of the Prophet, if not in direct violation, by a convenient interpretation of the Law.

Polygamy, on the whole, is justly considered as unfavourable to population, but while it diminishes in one class, it may proportionately tend to rapid and continual increase in another. The crowding together of numerous females in one hareem, unless they are imported from foreign countries, since the number of male and female births are nearly equal, must withdraw them from the lower and poorer classes. While then the wealthy and the powerful would have very large families, the poor would be condemned to sterile celibacy, to promiscuous concubinage, or worse. In this relation

stood the Christian to the Mohammedan population. There can be no doubt that the Christian females were drawn off in great numbers by violence, by seduction, by all the means at the command of the conqueror, of the master, of the purchaser, into the hareems of the Islamites. Among the earliest questions suggested to the Caliph by the chiefs of the Syrian army, was the lawfulness of intermarriage with Grecian women, which had been prohibited by the severe Abu Obeidah. The more indulgent Caliph Omar, though himself the most abstemious of men, admitted the full right of the brave Mohammedans to these enjoyments which they had won by their valour. Those who had no families in Arabia, might marry in Syria; and might purchase female slaves to the utmost of their desires and of their abilities.² The Christian, on the other hand, confined by his religion to one wife, often too degraded or too poor to desire or to maintain one; with a strong and melancholy sense of the insecurity of his household; perhaps with the monastic feeling, already so deeply impressed on many minds, now strengthened by such dismal calamities, might, if of a better class, shrink from being the parent of a race of slaves; or impose upon himself as a virtue that continence which was almost a necessity.

But all the children of Christian women by Mohammedans, even if the mothers should have remained faithful to the Gospel, would, of course, be brought up as Mohammedans; and thus, in the fresh and vigorous days of the early Arabian conquerors, before the hareem had produced its inevitable eventual effects, effeminacy, feebleness, premature exhaustion, and domestic jealousies, polygamy would be constantly swelling the

² Ockley, i. 275.

number of the Mohammedan aristocracy, while the Christians were wasting away in numbers, as in wealth and position. Nor would it be the higher ranks of the conquerors alone which would be thus intercepting, as it were, the natural growth of the Christian population, and turning it into Mohammedan. The Arab invasions were not, like the Teutonic, the migrations of tribes and nations, but the inroad of armies. Some might return to their families in Arabia; a few, when settled in foreign lands, might be joined by their household; but by far the larger number of the warriors, whether married or unmarried, would assert the privilege of conquest sanctioned by the Korân, and by the Caliph, the expounder of the Korân. As long as there were women, the hot Arab would not repress his authorized passions; he would not wait for paradise to reward his toils. The females would be the possession of the strongest; and he would not permit his offspring, even if the mother should be a fervent Christian, and retain influence over her child (in most cases she would probably be indifferent, if not a convert), to inherit the degradation of an inferior caste, but would assert for him all the rights of Islamitish descent. It would be difficult to calculate the effect of this constant propagation of one race, and diminution of the other, even in a few generations.

So grew the Mohammedan empire into a multitude of Mohammedan nations, owing, notwithstanding contested successions, at least a remote allegiance to the Caliph, the heir and representative of the Prophet, but with their religious far more formidable to Christendom than their political unity. Christendom was not only assailed in front and on its more immediate borders; not only reduced to but

Extent of
Mohammedan
con-
quests.

a precarious and narrow footing in Asia; endangered, so soon as the Arabs became a naval as well as a military power, along the whole of the Mediterranean, in all its islands and on all its coasts: but it was flanked, as it were, by the Mohammedans of Spain, who crossed the Pyrenees, and penetrated into the very heart of the Frankish empire.

But the most important consequence of the outburst of Mohammedanism in the history of the world and of Christianity was its inevitable transmutation of Christianity into a religion of war, at first defensive, afterwards, during the Crusades, aggressive. Religious wars, strictly speaking, were as yet unknown. Christian nations had mingled in strife, religious animosities had embittered, or even been a pretext for wars between the Arian Goths or Vandals and the Trinitarian Romans or Franks. Local persecutions, as among the Donatists of Africa, had been enforced and repelled by arms; perhaps in some instances bishops, in defence of their native country, had at least directed military operations. In ancient history the gods of conflicting nations had joined in the contest. But the world had not yet witnessed wars of which religion was the avowed and ostensible motive, the object of conquest the propagation of an adverse faith, the penalty of defeat the oppression, if not the extirpation, of a national creed. The appearance of the Crescent or of the Cross, not so much over the fortresses or citadels, as over the temples of God, the churches, or the mosques, was the conclusive sign of the victory of Christian or Islamite. Hence sprung the religious element in Christian chivalry; and happily, or rather mercifully for the destinies of mankind in which Christianity and Christian civilisation were hereafter to resume, or, more properly, to attain their

slow preponderance (it may be hoped, their complete and final triumph), was it ordained that the ruder barbarian virtues, strength, energy, courage, endurance, enterprise, had been infused into the worn-out and decrepit Roman empire ; that kings of Teutonic descent, Franks, Germans, Normans, had inherited the dominions of the Western empire, and made, in some respects, until the late conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, common cause with the Christian East. Christendom thus assailed along its whole frontier, and threatened in its very centre, in Rome itself, and even in Gaul, was compelled to emblazon the Cross on its banner, and to heighten all the impulses of freedom and patriotism by the still stronger passion of religious enthusiasm. Christianity had subdued the world by peace, she could only defend it by war. However foreign then and adverse to her genuine spirit ; however it might tend to promote the worst and most anti-Christian vices, cruelty, licentiousness, pride, hatred, and to establish brute force as the rule and law of society ; however the very virtues of such a period might harmonize but doubtfully with the Gospel ; it was an ordeal through which it must pass. The Church must become militant in its popular and secular sense ; it must protect its altars, its temples, its Gospel itself by other arms than those of patient endurance, mild persuasion, resigned and submissive martyrdom.

The change was as complete as inevitable. ' Christianity in its turn began to make reprisals by the Mohammedan apostleship of fire and sword. Christianity warlike.

The noblest and most earnest believers might seem to have read the Korân rather than the Gospel. The faith of Christ or the sword is the battleword of Charlemagne against the Saxons ; the Pope preaches the Crusades ;

and St. Louis devoutly believes that he is hewing his way to heaven through the bleeding ranks of the Saracens.

Nor indeed, in some other respects, was Mohammedanism altogether an unworthy antagonist of Christianity. Not less rapid and wonderful than the expansion of the Mohammedan empire, and the religion of Islam, was the growth of Mohammedan civilisation—that civilisation the highest, it should seem, attainable by the Asiatic type of mankind. Starting above six centuries later, it has nearly reached its height long before Christianity. The barbarous Bedouins are become magnificent monarchs; in Damascus, in Bagdad, in Samarcand, in Cairo, in Cairouan, in Fez, in Seville, and in Cordova, the arts of peace are cultivated with splendour and success. The East had probably never beheld courts more polished than that of Haroun al Raschid. Cairo, in some points at least, rivalled Alexandria. Africa had not yet become a coast of pirates. In Spain cultivation had never been carried to such perfection: Andalusia has never recovered the expulsion of the Moors. In most of the Mohammedan cities the mosques were probably, in grandeur and decoration (so far as severe Islamism would allow), as rich as the Christian cathedrals of those times. Letters, especially poetry, were objects of proud patronage by the more enlightened caliphs; the sciences began to be introduced from Greece, perhaps from India. Europe recovered the astronomy of Alexandria, even much of the science of Aristotle, from Arabic sources. Commerce led her caravans through the whole range of the Mohammedan dominions; the products of India found their way to the court of Cordova. Mohammedanism might seem in danger of decay, from the progress of its own unwarlike

magnificence and luxury. But it was constantly finding on its borders, or within its territories, new fierce and often wandering tribes. New Arabs, as it were, who revived all its old adventurous spirit, embraced Islamism with all the fervour of proselytes, and either filled its thrones with young dynasties of valiant and ambitious kings, or propagated its empire into new regions. The Affghans overran India, and established the great empire of the Ghaznevides. The Turks, race after race, Seljukians and Osmanlies, seized the falling crescent, and, rivalling in fanaticism the earliest believers, perpetuated the propagation of the faith.

The expansion of Islamism itself, the enlargement of her stern and narrow creed, is even more extraordinary. The human mind, urged into active and vigorous movement, cannot be restrained within close and jealous limits. The Korân submits to a transmutation more complete than the Gospel under the influences of Asiatic Gnosticism and Greek philosophy. Metaphysical theology, if it does not tamper with the unity of God, discusses his being and attributes. The rigid predestinarianism is softened away, if not among the soldiery, in the speculative schools. The sublime, unapproachable Deity is approached, embraced, mingled with, by the Divine Love of Sufi. Monachism enslaves the Mohammedan, as it had the Christian mind. The dervish rivals the Christian anchorite, as the Christian anchorite the Jewish Essene or the Indian Faquir.

CHAPTER III.

Conversion of England.

CHRISTIANITY had thus lost the greater part of her dominion in two continents. Almost the whole of Asia had settled down under what might seem a more congenial form of civil and religious despotism; it became again Asiatic in all its public and social system. Northern Africa was doomed to exchange her Roman and Christian civilisation for Arabic religion, manners, and language, which by degrees, after some centuries, partly from the fanatic and more rude Mohammedanism of the savage native races, the Berbers and others, sank back into utter barbarism. In Europe, in the mean time, Christianity was still making large acquisitions, laying the foundations of that great federation of Christian kingdoms, which by their hostility, as well as their intercourse, were to act upon each other: until at length that political and balanced system should arise, out of which and by means of which, our smaller continent was to take the lead in the fuller development of humanity; and Christian Europe rise to a height of intellectual and social culture, unexampled in the history of mankind, and not yet, perhaps, at its full and perfect growth. For it was Christianity alone which maintained some kind of combination among the crumbling fragments of the Roman empire. If the Barbaric kingdoms had two associating elements, their common Teutonic descent and their common religion, far the weaker was

the kindred and affinity of race. Their native independence was constantly breaking up that affinity into separate, and, ere long, hostile tribes. No established right of primogeniture controlled the perpetual severance of every realm, at each succession, into new lines of kings. Thus Christianity alone was a bond of union, strong and enduring. The Teutonic kingdoms acknowledged their allegiance to the ecclesiastical supremacy of Rome; Rome was the centre and capital of Western Christendom.

Western Christendom was still aggressive. Its first effort was to reclaim Britain, which had been almost entirely lost to pagan barbarism: and Conquests of Western Christianity. next advancing beyond the uncertain boundary of the old Roman empire, to plant all along the Rhine, and far beyond, among the yet unfelled forests and untilled morasses of Germany, settlements which gradually grew up into great and wealthy cities. Slowly, indeed, but constantly in advance, after the repulse of the Saracenic invasion by Charles Martel, Christianity remained, if not undisputed, yet the actual sovereign of all Europe, with the exception of the Mauro-Spanish kingdom and some of the Mediterranean islands; and so compensated by its conquests in the North for its losses in the East and South. Till many centuries later, a new Asiatic race, the Seljukian Turks, a new outburst, as it were, with much of the original religious fanaticism, precipitated itself upon Europe, and added the narrow remnant of the Greek empire to Islamism and Asiatic influence.

Britain was the only country in which the conquest by the Northern barbarians had been followed by the extinction of Christianity. Christianity in Britain. Nothing certain is known concerning the first promulgation of

the Gospel in Roman Britain. The apostolic establishment by St. Paul has not the slightest historical ground; and considering the state of the island, a state of fierce and perpetual war between the advancing Roman conquerors and the savage natives, may be dismissed as nearly impossible. The Roman legionary on active service, the painted Briton, in stern resistance to the Roman and under his Druidical hierarchy, would offer few proselytes, even to an apostle. The conversion of King Lucius is a legend. There can be no doubt that conquered and half-civilised Britain, like the rest of the Roman empire, gradually received, during the second and third centuries, the faith of Christ. The depth of her Christian cultivation appears from her fertility in saints and in heretics. St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, probably imbibed the first fervour of those Christian feelings, which wrought so powerfully on the Christianity of the age, in her native Britain. St. Alban, from his name and from his martyrdom, which there seems no reason to doubt, was probably a Roman soldier.* Our legendary annals are full of other holy names; while Pelagius, and probably his companion Celestine, have given a less favourable celebrity to the British Church.^b

But all were swept away, the worshippers of the saints and the followers of the heretics, by the Teutonic

* This will account for S. Alban's death in the persecution of Diocletian, which did not extend, in its extreme violence at least, to the part of the empire governed by Constantius. Yet the doubtful protection of that emperor may neither have been able nor willing to prevent zealous officers from putting the military test to their soldiers. The

persecution began with the army.—See Hist. of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 214.

^b S. Germain, Bishop of Auxerre, is said to have been sent into Britain to extirpate Pelagianism, which had spread to a great extent. But this, considering how early the monk left his native land, must be very doubtful.—The authority is Prosper.

conquest. The German races which overran the island came from a remote quarter yet unpene- Christianity retires before the Saxons. trated by the missionaries of the Gospel. The Goths, who formed three kingdoms in Italy, Spain, and Southern France, were already Christians; the Lombards partially converted; even among the Franks. Christianity was known, and perhaps had some proselytes before the victories of Clovis. But the Saxons and the Anglians were far more rude and savage in their manners; in their religion unreclaimed idolaters. They knew nothing of Christianity, but as the religion of that abject people whom they were driving before them into their mountains and fastnesses. Their conquest was not the settlement of armed conquerors amidst a subject people, but the gradual expulsion—it might almost seem, at length, the total extirpation—of the British and Roman British inhabitants. Christianity receded with the conquered Britons into the mountains of Wales, or towards the borders of Scotland, or took refuge among the peaceful and flourishing monasteries of Ireland. On the one hand, the ejection, more or less complete, of the native race, shows that the contest was fierce and long; the re-occupation of the island by paganism is a strong confirmation of the complete expulsion of the Britons. The implacable hostility engendered by this continuous war, prevented that salutary re-action of the Christianity of the conquered races on the barbarian conquerors, which took place in other countries. The clergy fled, perhaps fought, with their flocks, and neither sought nor found opportunities of amicable intercourse, which might have led to the propagation of their faith; while the savage pagans demolished the churches and monasteries (which must have existed in considerable numbers) with the other

vestiges of Roman civilisation.^c They were little disposed to worship the God of a conquered people or to adopt the religion of a race whom they either despised as weak and unwarlike, or hated as stubborn and implacable enemies.

A century—a century of continued warfare^d—would hardly allay the jealousy with which the Anglo-Saxons would have received any attempt at conversion from the British churches. Nor was there sufficient charity in the British Christians to enlighten the paganism of their conquerors. They consoled themselves (they are taunted with this sacrifice of Christian zeal to national hatred) for the loss of their territory, by the damnation of their conquerors; which they were not generous enough to attempt to avert; they would at least have heaven to themselves, undisturbed by the intrusion of the Saxon.^e Happily Christianity appeared in an opposite quarter. Its missionaries from Rome were unaccompanied by any of these causes of mistrust or dislike. It came into that part of the kingdom the farthest removed from the hostile Britons. It was the religion of the powerful kingdom of the Franks; the influence of Bertha, the Frankish princess, the wife of King Ethelbert, wrought no doubt more powerfully for the reception of the faith than the zeal and eloquence of Augustine.

^c The fine legend of the Halleluiah Victory, in which St. Germanus, at the head of an army of newly baptised Christians (at Easter), marched against the Saxons, chanting Alleluia, and overwhelming them with rocks and trees in a difficult pass of the Welsh mountains, is one of the brightest episodes in the war.

^d The first Saxon invasion was

A.D. 476. Augustine came to England, A.D. 597.

^e “Qui inter alia inerrabilium scelerum facta, quæ historicus eorum Gildas flebili sermone describit, et hoc addebant, ut nunquam genti Saxonum sive Anglorum, secum Britanniam incolenti, verbum fidei prædicante committerent.”—Bede, H. E. i. c. 22.

Gregory the Great, it has been said, before his accession to the Papacy, had set out on the sublime though desperate mission of the re-conquest of Britain from idolatry. It was Gregory who commissioned the monk Augustine to venture on this glorious service. Yet so fierce and savage, according to the common rumour, were the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of Britain, that Augustine shrunk from the wild and desperate enterprise; he hesitated before he would throw himself into the midst of a race of barbarous unbelievers, of whose language he was ignorant. Gregory would allow no retreat from a mission which he had himself been prepared to undertake, and which would not have appalled, even under less favourable circumstances, his firmer courage.

The fears of Augustine as to this wild and unknown land proved exaggerated. The monk and his forty followers landed without opposition on the shores of Britain. They sent to announce themselves as a solemn embassy from Rome, to offer to the King of Kent the everlasting bliss of heaven, an eternal kingdom in the presence of the true and living God. To Ethelbert, though not unacquainted with Christianity (by the terms of his marriage, Bertha, the Frankish princess, had stipulated for the free exercise of her religion), there must have been something strange and imposing in the landing of these peaceful missionaries on a shore still constantly swarming with fierce pirates, who came to plunder or to settle among their German kindred. The name of Rome must have sounded, though vague, yet awful to the ear of the barbarian. Any dim knowledge of Christianity which he had acquired from his Frankish wife would be blended with mysterious veneration for the Pope, the great high

priest, the vicar of Christ and of God upon earth. With the cunning suspicion which mingles with the dread of the barbarian, the king insisted that the first meeting should be in the open air, as giving less scope for magic arts, and not under the roof of a house. Augustine and his followers met the king with all the pomp which they could command, with a crucifix of silver in the van of their procession, a picture of the Redeemer borne aloft, and chaunting their litanies for the salvation of the king and of his people. "Your words and offers," replied the king, "are fair; but they are new to me, and as yet unproved, I cannot abandon at once the faith of my Anglian ancestors."^f But the missionaries were entertained with courteous hospitality. Their severely monastic lives, their constant prayers, fastings, and vigils, with their confident demeanour, impressed more and more favourably the barbaric mind. Rumour attributed to them many miracles. Before long the King of Kent was an avowed convert; his example was followed by many of his noblest subjects. No compulsion was used, but it was manifest that the royal favour inclined to those who received the royal faith.

Augustine, as the reward of his triumph, and as the encouragement of his future labours, was nominated to preside over the infant Church. He received a Metropolitan pallium, which made him independent of the bishops of Gaul. The choice of the see wavered for a short time between Canterbury and London, but it was eventually placed at Canterbury. The Pope already contemplated the complete spiritual conquest of the island, and anticipated a second metropolitan see at

^f All this must have gone on through the cold process of interpretation, probably by some attendants of the queen. Augustine knew no Teutonic language. Latin to the Anglo-Saxons was an unknown.

York. Each metropolitan was to preside in his province over twelve bishops. So deliberately did the ardent Gregory partition this realm, which was still divided into conflicting pagan kingdoms. Augustine was in constant correspondence with Rome; he requested and received instructions upon some dubious points of discipline. The questions and the replies are deeply tinged with the monastic spirit of the times.⁵ It might seem astonishing that minds capable of achieving such great undertakings, should be fettered by such petty scruples; but unless he had been a monk, Augustine would hardly have attempted, or have succeeded in the conversion of Britain. With this monkish narrowness singularly contrasts the language of Gregory. On the more delicate question as to the course to be pursued in the conversion of the pagans, whether that of rigid, uncompromising condemnation of idolatry with all its feelings and usages, or the gentler though somewhat temporising plan of imbuing such of the heathen usages, as might be allowed to remain, with a Christian spirit; whether to appropriate the heathen temples to Christian worship, and to substitute the saints of the Church for

⁵ Some of the strange questions submitted to the Papal judgment have been the subject of sarcastic animadversion.* But the age and system were in fault, not the men. There are functions of our animal nature on which the less the mind dwells the better. It was the vital evil of the monastic system, that it compelled the whole thoughts to dwell upon them. The awfulness of the religious rites, which it was the object of this system to guard by the most minute

provisions as to personal purity, was in all probability much more endangered. But on the whole it is impossible not to admire the gentleness, moderation, and good sense of Gregory's decisions. It is remarkable to find him shaking off the fetters of a rigid uniformity of ceremonial. "*Ex singulis ergo quibusque ecclesiis, quæ pia, quæ religiosa, quæ recta sunt, elige, et hæc quasi in fasciculum collecta, apud asylum mentis in consuetudinem depone.*"—Bede, i. c. 27.

* Hume, Hist. ch. i.

the deities of the heathen—was it settled policy, or more mature reflection which led the Pope to devolve the more odious duty, the total abolition of idolatry with all its practices, upon the temporal power, the barbarian king; while it permitted the milder and more winning course to the clergy, the protection of the hallowed places and usages of the heathen from insult by consecrating them to holier uses? To Ethelbert

Policy of
Gregory.

the Pope writes, enjoining him, in the most solemn manner, to use every means of force as well as persuasion to convert his subjects; utterly to destroy their temples, to show no toleration to those who adhere to their idolatrous rites. This he urges by the manifest terrors of the Last Day, already darkening around; and by which, believing no doubt his own words, he labours to work on the timid faith of the barbarian. To Mellitus, now bishop of London, on the other hand, he enjoins great respect for the sacred places of the heathen, and forbids their demolition. He only commands them to be cleared of their idols, to be purified by holy-water for the services of Christianity. New altars are to be set up, and reliques enshrined in the precincts. Even the sacrifices were to be continued under another name.^b The oxen which the heathen used to immolate to their gods were to be brought in procession on holy days. The huts or tents of boughs, which used to be built for the assembling worshippers, were still to be set up, the oxen slain and eaten in honour of the Christian festival: and thus these outward

^b "Quia si fana eadem bene constructa sunt, necesse est, ut a cultu dæmonum in obsequio veri Dei debeant commutari; ut dura gens ipsa eadem fana sua non videt destrui, de corde errorem deponat, et Deum verum cognoscens ac adorans ad loca, quæ consuevit, familiarius concurrat."—Greg. M. Epist. ad Mellit.: quoted also in Bede, i. 30.

rejoicings were to train an ignorant people to the perception of true Christian joys.

The British Church, secluded in the fastnesses of Wales, could not but hear of the arrival of the Roman missionaries, and of their success in the conversion of the Saxons. Augustine and his followers could not but inquire with deep interest concerning their Christian brethren in the remote parts of the island. It was natural that they should enter into communication: unhappily they met to dispute on points of difference, not to join in harmonious fellowship on the broad ground of their common Christianity. The British Church followed the Greek usage in the celebration of Easter; they had some other points of ceremonial, which, with their descent, they traced to the East: and the zealous missionaries of Gregory could not comprehend the uncharitable inactivity of the British Christians, which had withheld the blessings of the Gospel from their pagan conquerors. The Roman and the British clergy met, it is said, in solemn synod. The Romans demanded submission to their discipline, and the implicit adoption of the Western ceremonial on the contested points. The British bishops demurred; Augustine proposed to place the issue of the dispute on the decision of a miracle. The miracle was duly performed,—a blind man brought forward and restored to sight. But the miracle made not the slightest impression on the obdurate Britons. They demanded a second meeting, and resolved to put the Christianity of the strangers to a singular test, a moral proof with them more convincing than an apparent miracle. True Christianity, they said, “is meek and lowly of heart. Such will be this man (Augustine), if he be a man of God. If he be haughty

British
Church

Meeting of
Roman and
British
clergy.

and ungentle, he is not of God, and we may disregard his words. Let the Romans arrive first at the synod. If on our approach he rises from his seat to receive us with meekness and humility, he is the servant of Christ, and we will obey him. If he despises us, and remains seated, let us despise him." Augustine sat, as they drew near, in unbending dignity. The Britons at once refused obedience to his commands, and disclaimed him as their Metropolitan. The indignant Augustine (to prove his more genuine Christianity) burst out into stern denunciations of their guilt, in not having preached the Gospel to their enemies. He prophesied (a prophecy which could hardly fail to hasten its own fulfilment) the divine vengeance, by the hands of the Saxons. So complete was the alienation, so entirely did the Anglo-Saxon clergy espouse the fierce animosities of the Anglo-Saxons, and even embitter them by their theologic hatred, that the gentle Bede relates with triumph, as a manifest proof of the divine wrath against the refractory Britons, a great victory over that wicked race, preceded by a massacre of twelve hundred British clergy (chiefly monks of Bangor), who stood aloof on an eminence praying for the success of their countrymen.¹

During the lifetime of Augustine Christianity appeared to have gained a firm footing in the kingdom of Kent. A church arose in Canterbury, with dwellings for the bishop and his clergy; and a monastery without the walls, for the cœnobites who accompanied him. Augustine handed down his see in this promising state to his successor, Laurentius. The king of the East Saxons (Essex) had followed the

Relapse into
heathenism.

¹ "Itaque in hos primum arma verti jubet, et sic cæteras nefandæ militiæ copias . . . delevit."—H. E. ii. 2,

example of the King of Kent. Two other bishoprics, at London and at Rochester, had been founded, and entrusted to Mellitus and Justus. But Ethelbert, the Christian King of Kent, died, and was buried by the side of his wife, Bertha. About the same time died also Sebert, the King of Essex. The successors to both kingdoms fell back to paganism. Both nations, at least the leading men, joined as readily in the rejection, as they had in the acceptance of Christianity. The new King of Kent was pagan in morals as in creed. He was inflamed with an unlawful passion for his father's widow. The rudeness and simplicity of the men of Essex show how little real knowledge of the religion had been disseminated; they insisted on partaking of the fine white bread which the bishops were distributing to the faithful in the Eucharist: and when the clergy refused, unless they submitted to be baptised, they cast them out of the land.

It was a sad meeting of the three Christian bishops, who saw all their pious labours frustrated; and so desperate seemed the state of things, Laurentius. that the bishops of London and of Rochester fled into France. Laurentius determined on one last effort; it was prompted, as he declared, by a heavenly vision. He appeared one morning before the king, and, casting off his robe, showed his back scarred and bleeding from a recent and severe flagellation. The king inquired who had dared to treat with such indignity a man of his rank and character. The bishop averred that St. Peter had appeared to him by night, and had inflicted that pitiless but merited punishment for his cowardice in abandoning his heaven-appointed mission. The king was struck with amazement, bowed at once before the awful message, commanded the reinstatement of Chris-

tianity in all its honours, and gave the best proof of his sincerity in breaking off his incestuous connexion. The fugitive bishops were recalled; Justus resumed the see of Rochester, but the obstinate idolaters of London refused to receive Mellitus. That prelate, on the death of Laurentius, succeeded to the Metropolitan see of Canterbury.

The powerful kingdom of Northumberland was opened Christianity in Northumberland. to the first teachers of Christianity by the same influence which had prepared the success of Augustine in Kent. Edwin the king married a daughter of Ethelbert, the Christian sovereign of Kent. The same stipulation was made as in the case of Bertha, for the free exercise of her religion. The sanctity attributed to their females by the whole German race, the vague notion that they were often gifted with prophetic powers; or favoured with divine revelations; with something, perhaps, of a higher cultivation and commanding gentleness, derived from a purer religion, increased the natural ascendancy of birth and rank. Ethelberga was accompanied into Northumberland by the saintly Paulinus. Already, in the well-organised scheme of Gregory for the spiritual affairs of this island, York had been designated as the seat of a northern Metropolitan. Paulinus was consecrated before his departure bishop of that see. But Paulinus laboured long in vain; his influence reached no further than to prevent the family of the queen from relapsing into paganism.

Personal danger, the desire of revenge, and paternal feeling, opened at length the hard heart of Edwin. An assassin, in the pay of his enemy the King of Wessex, attempted his life; the blow was intercepted by the body of a faithful servant. At that very time his queen was brought to bed of her first child, a daughter.

Paulinus, who was present, in sincerity no doubt of heart, assured the king that he owed the safety of his life, and the blessing of his child, to the prayers which the bishop had been offering up to the God of the Christians. “If your God will likewise grant me victory over my enemies, and revenge upon the King of Wessex, I will renounce my idols and worship him.” As a pledge that he was in earnest, he allowed the baptism of the infant.

Edwin was victorious in his wars against Wessex. But, either doubting whether after all the God of the Christians was the best object of worship for a warlike race, or mistrusting his own authority over his subjects, he still hesitated notwithstanding the urgent remonstrances of Paulinus, to fulfil his promise. He ceased to worship his idols, but did not accept Christianity. Even letters from the Pope to Edwin and his queen had but little effect. Paulinus now perhaps first obtained knowledge of Edwin’s wild and romantic adventures in his youth, and of a remarkable dream, which had great influence on his future destiny. An exile from the throne of his fathers, Edwin had at length found precarious protection in the court of Redwald, king of the East Anglians. Warned that his host meditated his surrender to his enemies, he was abandoning himself to his desperate fate, when an unknown person appeared to him in a vision, not only promised to fix the wavering fidelity of Redwald, but his restoration likewise to the throne of his ancestors, in greater power and glory than had ever been obtained by any of the kings of the island.

Paulinus, however he obtained his knowledge, seized on this vision to promote his holy object. He boldly ascribed it to the Lord, who had already invested Edwin

Conversion of
King Edwin.

in his kingdom, given him victory over his enemies, and, if he received the faith, would likewise deliver him from the eternal torments of hell. Edwin summoned a conference of his pagan priesthood; this meeting gives a striking picture of the people and the times. To the solemn question, as to which religion was the true one, the High Priest thus replied:—"No one has applied to the worship of our gods with greater zeal and fidelity than myself, but I do not see that I am the better for it; I am not more prosperous, nor do I enjoy a greater share of the royal favour. I am ready to give up those ungrateful gods; let us try whether these new ones will reward us better." But there were others of more reflective minds. A thane came forward and said, "To what, O King, shall I liken the life of man? When you are feasting with your thanes in the depth of winter, and the hall is warm with the blazing fire, and all around the wind is raging and the snow falling, a little bird flies through the hall, enters at one door and escapes at the other. For a moment, while within, it is visible to the eyes, but it came out of the darkness of the storm, and glides again into the same darkness. So is human life; we behold it for an instant, but of what has gone before, or what is to follow after, we are utterly ignorant. If the new religion can teach this wonderful secret, let us give it our serious attention." Paulinus was called in to explain the doctrines of the Gospel. To complete the character of this dramatic scene, it is not the reflective thane, but the high priest who yields at once to the eloquence of the preacher. He proposed instantly to destroy the idols and the altars of his vain gods. With Edwin's leave, he put on arms and mounted a horse (the Anglian priests were forbidden the use of arms and rode on

mares), and, while the multitude stood aghast at his seeming frenzy, he spurred hastily to the neighbouring temple of Godmundingham, defied the gods by striking his lance into the wall, and encouraged and assisted his followers in throwing down and setting fire to the edifice. The temple and its gods were in an instant a heap of ashes.^k

Edwin, with his family and his principal thanes, yielded their allegiance to Christianity. York was chosen as the seat of Paulinus the Metropolitan. In both divisions of the great Northumbrian kingdom, the Archbishop continued for six years, till the death of Edwin, to propagate the Gospel with unexampled rapidity. For thirty-six consecutive days he was employed, in the royal palace of Glendale, in catechising and baptising in the neighbouring stream; and in Deira the number of converts was equal to those in Bernicia. The Deiran proselytes were baptised in the river Swale, near Catterick.

The blessings of peace followed in the train of Christianity. The savage and warlike people seemed tamed into a gentle and unoffending race. So great are said to have been the power and influence of Edwin as Bretwalda,^m or Sovereign of all the kings of Britain, that a woman might pass, with her new-born babe, uninjured from sea to sea. All along the roads the king had caused tanks of water to be placed, with cups of brass, to refresh the traveller. Yet Edwin maintained the awfulness of military state; wherever he went he was

^k Bede, ii. c. xlii.

^m I leave the question as to the real existence of a Bretwalda to Mr. Kemble, and those, if there still are those, who resist his arguments. If

no Bretwalda, as is most probable, Edwin had great power. Much of this history, so striking in many scenes, trembles on the verge of legend.

preceded by banners; his rigorous execution of justice was enforced by the display of kingly strength.

But the times were neither ripe for such a government nor such a religion. A fierce pagan obtained, not

Penda. at first the crown, but a complete ascendancy in yet un-Christianised Mercia. The savage

Penda entered into a dangerous confederacy with Ceadwalla the Briton, King of Gwyneth, or North Wales. Ceadwalla was a Christian, but the animosity of race was stronger than the community of religion. The ravages of the Briton were more cruel and ruthless than those of Penda himself, who was thought ferocious even among a ferocious and pagan people. Edwin fell in

A.D. 633. the great battle of Hatfield Chase, near Doncaster; and with Edwin seemed to fall the

whole noble but unstable edifice of Christianity in the north of the island. The queen of Edwin fled with Paulinus to the court of her brother, the King of Kent.ⁿ

The successors to the Northumbrian kingdom, which was now again divided, Osric and Eanfrid, the sons of the former usurper, and enemies of Edwin, made haste to disclaim all connexion with the fallen king by their renunciation of Christianity. Both, however, were cut off, one in war, the other by treachery. Oswald was now the eldest surviving prince of the royal house of Edelfrid; and Oswald set up the Cross as his standard, appealed, and not in vain, to the Christian's God, and to the zeal of his Christian followers. After ages revered the Cross, to which was ascribed the victory of Oswald over the barbarous Ceadwalla, and

Fall of Edwin
and of Chris-
tianity.

ⁿ Paulinus, who had received the pall of the archbishopric of York, as Honori-
us that of Canterbury, from the Pope Honori-
us, undertook the administration of the vacant bishopric
of Rochester.—Bede, ii. 18.

the re-establishment of the kingdom; portions of the wood were said to be endowed with miraculous powers. The Roman clergy had fled with Paulinus after the fall of Edwin; and the gratified Oswald, eager to lose no time in the restoration of Christianity, looked to his nearest neighbours in Scotland for missionaries to accomplish the holy work. The peaceful monastic establishments of Ireland had spread Monasteries of Scotland and Ireland. into Scotland, and made settlements in the Western Isles. Of these was Hii, or Iona, the retreat of the holy Columba; and in this wild island had grown up a monastery far renowned for its sanctity. From this quarter Oswald sought a bishop for the Northumbrian Church. The first who was sent was Corman, a man of austere and inflexible character, who, finding more resistance than he expected to his doctrines, in a full assembly of the nation, sternly reproached the Northumbrians for their obstinacy, and declared that he would no longer waste his labours on so irreclaimable a race. A gentle voice was heard: "Brother, have you not been too harsh with your unlearned hearers? Should you not, like the apostles, have fed them with the milk of Christian doctrine, till they could receive the full feast of our sublimer truths?" All eyes were turned on Aidan, a humble but devout monk; by general acclamation that discreet and gentle teacher Aidan. was saluted as bishop. The Episcopal seat was placed at Lindisfarne, which received from a monastery, already established and endowed, the name of Holy Island. In this seclusion, protected by the sea from sudden attacks of pagan enemies, lay the quiet bishopric; and on the wild shores of the island the bishop was wont to sit and preach to the thanes and to the people who crowded to hear him. Aidan was yet imperfectly acquainted with

the Saxon language, and the king, who as an exile in Scotland had learned the Celtic tongue, sat at the bishop's feet, interpreting his words to the wondering hearers. From the Holy Island, Aidan and his brethren, now familiar with the Saxon speech, preached the Gospel in every part of the kingdom;^o they would receive no reward from the wealthy, only that hospitality required by austere and self-denying men; all gifts which they did receive were immediately distributed among the poor, or applied to the redemption of captives. Churches arose in all quarters, and Christianity seemed to have gained a permanent predominance throughout Northumbria.

Oswald might enjoy the pious satisfaction of assisting in the conversion of the most pagan of the Saxon kingdoms, that of Wessex.^p The Bishop Birinus had been delegated by the Pope (Honorius) on this difficult enterprise. His success, if not altogether, was in great part due to the visit of Oswald, to demand in marriage the daughter of Cynegils, the king. The king, his whole family, and his principal thanes, received baptism at the hands of Birinus, for whose residence was assigned the city of Dorchester, near Oxford.

But paganism was still unbroken in Mercia, and at the head of the pagan power stood the aged but still ferocious and able Penda, who had already once overthrown the kingdom of Northumbria and killed in battle the Christian Edwin. A second invasion by Penda the Mercian was fatal to Oswald; he, too, fell in the field. His memory lived long in the grateful reverence of his people. His dying thoughts

^o Compare the high character of even excuses Aidan's error as to the Aidan in the Saxon, and as to ritual time of keeping Easter.—iii. 17. observance, Roman, Bede, iii. 5. Bede ^p "Paganissimos."—Bede.

were said to have been of their eternal welfare; his dying words "The Lord have mercy on their souls!" A miraculous power was attributed to the dust of the field where his blood had flowed. The places, where his head and arms had been exposed on high poles by the insulting conqueror till they were laid to rest by the piety of his successor, were equally fertile in wonders.

That successor, his brother Oswio, followed the example of Oswald's Christian devotion with Oswio and Oswin. better fortune. But the commencement of his reign was sullied by a most unchristian crime. While Oswio was placed on the throne of Bernicia, Oswin, of the race of Edwin, was raised to that of Deira. Oswin was beautiful in countenance and noble in person, affable, generous, devout. The attachment of the good Bishop Aidan to Oswin was scarcely stronger than that of his ruder subjects. Jealousies soon arose between the two kingdoms which divided Northumbria. The guileless Oswin was betrayed and murdered by the more politic Oswio. On the spot where the murder was committed, Gelling near Richmond, a monastery was founded, at once in respect for the memory of the murdered and as an atonement for the guilt of the murderer.

The ability of Penda and the unmitigated ferocity of the old Saxon spirit gave him an advantage over his more gentle and civilised neighbours. This aged chief now aspired to the nominal, as he had long possessed the actual, sovereignty over the island. He had dethroned the King of Wessex; East Anglia was subservient to his authority; his influence named the King of Deira, and when he laid waste Bernicia as far as Bamborough, Oswio had neither the courage nor the power to resist the conqueror of Edwin and of Oswald.

The influence of the gentler sex at length brought Mercia within the pale of Christianity. Alchfrid, the son of Oswio, had married the daughter of Penda. The son of Penda, Peada, visited his sister. Alchfrid, partly by his own influence, partly by the beauty of his sister Alchfleda, of whom Peada became enamoured, succeeded in winning Peada to the faith of Christ. Peada returned to the court of his father a baptised Christian, accompanied by four priests. With that indifference which belongs to all the pagan systems, especially in their decline, even Penda, though he adhered to his war-god Woden, did not oppose the free promulgation of Christianity; but with much shrewdness he enforced upon those who professed to believe the creed of the Gospel the rigorous practice of its virtues. They were bound to obey the God in whom they chose to believe.^a

Penda himself maintained to the end his old Saxon and pagan privilege of ravaging his neighbours' territories and of enforcing the payment of an onerous tribute. His plunder and his exactions drove Oswio at length to despair. He promised a richer offering to God than he had ever paid to the Mercian Bretwalda, if he might obtain deliverance from the enemy of his family, his country, and his religion. The terrible battle which decided the fate of Northumbria, and led to the almost immediate reception of Christianity throughout the great kingdom of Mercia, was fought on the banks of the Aire^r near Leeds. Penda fell, and with Penda fell paganism. According to the Saxon proverb, the death of five kings was avenged in the waters of Winwéd—the death of Anna, of Sigebert, and of Egene, East Anglians, of Edwin and of Oswald.

^a D. 655.

^r Bede, iii. 21.

^r At Winwed field.

Oswio, by this victory, became the most powerful king in the island. Immediately after the death of Penda he overran Mercia and East Anglia; his authority was more complete than had ever been exercised by any Bretwalda or supreme sovereign. The Christianity of the island was almost co-extensive with the sovereignty of Oswio. In all the kingdoms, except by some singular chance, that of Sussex, it had been preached with more or less success. Everywhere episcopal sees had been founded and monasteries had arisen. In Kent, perhaps, alone, the last vestiges of idolatry had been destroyed by the zeal of Ercombert. Essex, almost the first to entertain Christianity, was one of the last to settle down into a Christian kingdom. Redwald, who had first embraced the faith, had wanted power or courage to establish it throughout his kingdom. He attempted a strange compromise. A temple subsisted for some time, in which the king had raised an altar to Christ, by the side of another which reeked with bloody sacrifices to the god of his fathers. But the zeal of his successors made up for the weakness of Redwald. Sigebert, the brother of Erpwald, Redwald's successor, abandoned the throne for the peaceful seclusion of a monastery. From this retreat he was forced in order to join in battle against the terrible Penda. He refused to bear arms, but not the less perished by the sword of the pitiless Mercian. But from that time Christianity prevailed in Essex, as well as throughout East Anglia, though perhaps less deeply rooted than in other parts of the island: for in the fatal pestilence which not long after ravaged both England and Ireland, many of the East Anglians, ascribing it to the wrath of their deserted deities, returned to their former idolatry. The episcopal

Power of
Oswio.

East Anglia.
A.D. 627.

A.D. 665.

seat of Essex was in London; that of East Anglia, first at Dunwich, afterwards at Thetford.

But triumphant Christianity was threatened with an internal schism; one half of the island had Division in the Anglo-Saxon Church. been converted by the monks from Scotland, the other by those of Rome. They were opposed on certain points of discipline, held hardly of less importance than vital truths of the Gospel.^s The different period at which each, according to the Eastern or the Roman usage, celebrated Easter, became not merely a speculative question, in which separate kingdoms or separate Churches might pursue each its independent course, but a practical evil, which brought dispute and discord even into the family of the king. The queen of Oswio, Eanfled, followed the Roman usage, which prevailed in Kent; Oswio, the king, cherished the memory of the holy Scottish prelate Aidan, and would not depart from his rule. So that while the queen was fasting with the utmost rigour on what in her calendar was Palm Sunday, the commencement of Passion week, the king was holding his Easter festival with conscientious rejoicings.

A synod was assembled at Whitby, the convent of the famous Abbess Hilda, at which appeared, on the Scottish side, Colman, the Bishop of Lindisfarne; on the other, Wilfrid, afterwards Archbishop of York, who had visited Rome, was firmly convinced of the Roman supremacy, and exercised great influence over Alchfrid, the heir to the throne. With Wilfrid was Agilbert, afterwards Bishop of Paris, and other distinguished men. Colman urged the uninterrupted descent of their tradition from

^s It is curious to find Greek Christianity thus at the verge of the Roman world maintaining some of its usages and co-equality.

St. John; the authority of Anatolius, the ecclesiastical historian; and that of the saintly Columba, the founder of Iona. Wilfrid alleged the supreme authority of St. Peter and his successors, and the consent of the rest of the Catholic world. "Will he," concluded Wilfrid, "set the authority of Columba in opposition to that of St. Peter, to whom were given the keys of heaven?" The king broke in, and, addressing the Scottish prelates, said, "Do you acknowledge that St. Peter has the keys of heaven?" "Unquestionably!" replied Colman. "Then, for my part," said Oswio, "I will hold to St. Peter, lest, when I offer myself at the gates of heaven, he should shut them against me." To this there was no answer.

A second question, that of the tonsure, was agitated, if with less vehemence, not without strong altercation. The Roman usage was to shave the crown of the head, and to leave a circle of hair, which represented the Saviour's crown of thorns; the Scottish shaved the front of the head in the form of a crescent, and allowed the hair to grow behind. Here likewise the Roman party asserted the authority of St. Peter, and taunted their adversaries with following the example of Simon Magus and his followers! Gradually the Roman custom prevailed on both these points: the Scottish clergy and monks in England by degrees conformed to the general usage; those who were less pliant retired to their remote monasteries in Iona or in Ireland.

In no country was Christianity so manifestly the parent of civilisation as among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. The Saxons were the fiercest of the Teutonic race. Roman culture had not, more than the Gospel, approached the sandy plains or dense forests which they inhabited in the north of Germany. On the rude

manners of the barbarian had been engrafted the sanguinary and brutalising habits of the pirate. Every vestige of the Roman civilisation of the island had vanished before their desolating inroad, and the Britons, during their long and stubborn resistance, had become as savage as their conquerors. The religion of the Anglo-Saxons was as cruel as their manners; they are said to have sacrificed a tenth of their principal captives on the altars of their gods.* A more settled residence in a country already brought into cultivation may in some degree have mitigated their ferocity, at all events weaned them from piratical adventure; but the century and a half which had elapsed before the descent of Augustine on their coasts had been passed in constant warfare, either against the Britons or of one kingdom against another.

Anglo-Saxon Britain had become again a world by itself, occupied by hostile races, which had no intercourse but that of war, and utterly severed from the rest of Europe. The effect of Christianity on Anglo-Saxon England was at once to re-establish a connexion both between the remoter parts of the island with each other, and of England with the rest of the Christian world. They ceased to dwell apart, a race of warlike, unapproachable barbarians, in constant warfare with the bordering tribes, or occupied in their own petty feuds or inroads; rarely, as in the case of Ethelbert, connected by intermarriage with some neighbouring Teutonic state. Though the Britons were still secluded in their mountains, or at the extremities of the land, by animosities which even Christianity could not allay, yet

* Sidon. Apoll. vii. 6. Compare | laud. Constant. p. 34; Zosimus, iii.,
 Amm. Marc. xxviii. p. 526; Procop. | Orosius, vii. p. 549. See Lingard,
 Hist. Goth. iv.; Julian, orat. i. in | Hist. of England, ch. ii. p. 62-3.

the Picts and Scots, and the parts of Ireland which were occupied by Christian monasteries, were now brought into peaceful communication, first with the kingdom of Northumbria, and, through ^{Intercourse with Rome.} Northumbria, with the rest of England. The intercourse with Europe was of far higher importance, and tended much more rapidly to introduce the arts and habits of civilisation into the land. There was a constant flow of missionaries across the British Channel, who possessed all the knowledge which still remained in Europe. All the earlier metropolitans of Canterbury and the bishops of most of the southern sees were foreigners; they were commissioned at least by Rome, if not consecrated there; they travelled backwards and forwards in person, or were in constant communication with that great city, in which were found all the culture, the letters, the arts, and sciences which had survived the general wreck. But the nobler Anglo-Saxons began soon to be ambitious of the dignity, the influence, or the higher qualifications of the Christian priesthood. Nor were the Roman clergy or monks so numerous as to be jealous of those native labourers in their holy work; if there was any jealousy, it was of the independent Scottish missionaries, their rivals in the north, and the opponents of their discipline. A native clergy seems to have grown up more rapidly in Britain than in any other of the Teutonic kingdoms. But they were in general the admiring pupils of the Roman clergy. To them Rome was the centre and source of the faith: a pilgrimage to Rome, to an aspirant after the dignity or the usefulness of the Christian priesthood, became the great object and privilege of life. Every motive which could stir the devout heart or the expanding mind sent them forth on this holy journey; piety,

which would actually tread a city honoured by the residence, and hallowed by the reliques of apostles; awful curiosity, which would behold and kneel before the vicar of Christ on earth, the successor of that Pope who had brought them within the pale of salvation; perhaps the desire of knowledge, and the wish to qualify themselves for the duties of their sacred station. Nor was this confined to the clergy. Little more than half a century after the landing of Augustine, Alchfrid, the son of the King of Northumbria, had determined to visit the eternal city. He was only prevented by the exigencies of the times, and the authority of his father. He was no doubt excited to this design by the accounts of the secular and religious wonders of the city, which already filled the mind of the famous Wilfrid, to whom his father, Oswio, had entrusted his education. Wilfrid had already, once at least, visited Rome; his friend Benedict Biscop several times.

The life of Wilfrid, the first highly distinguished of the native clergy, is at once the history of Anglo-Saxon Christianity in Britain to its complete establishment, and a singular illustration of the effects of this intercourse with the centre of civilisation in Italy on himself and on his countrymen.^u

Wilfrid. Wilfrid was the son of a Northumbrian thane. The sanctity of his later life, as usual, reflected back a halo of wonder around his infancy. The house in which his mother gave him birth shone with fire, like the burning bush in the Old Testament. In his youth he was gentle, firm, averse to childish pursuits, devoted to study. A jealous stepmother seconded his

^u Eddi, Vit. S. Wilfridi apud Gale X. Scriptores compared with the Ecclesiastical History of Bede.

desire to quit his father's house; she bestowed on him arms, a horse, and accoutrements, such as might beseem the son of a nobleman, when he should present himself at the court of his king. The beauty and quickness of the youth won the favour of the queen, Eanfled, who, discerning no doubt his serious turn of mind, entrusted him to the care of a cœnobite, with whom he retired to the monastery of Lindisfarne. After a few years he was seized with an earnest longing to visit the seat of the great apostle, St. Peter. Eanfled listened favourably to his design, gave him letters to her kinsman Ercombert, King of Kent; and, accompanied by another youth, Benedict Biscop, he crossed, in a ship provided and manned by King Ercombert, into France, and found his way to Lyons.

A.D. 654.

In that city he was hospitably received by Delfinus, the rich and powerful prelate of the see. Delfinus was so captivated by his manners and character that he made him an offer of splendid secular employment, proposed to adopt him as his son, to marry him to his niece, and put him at the head of the government over great part of Gaul.* But Wilfrid was too profoundly devoted to his religious views, too fully possessed with the desire of accomplishing his pilgrimage to Rome; he declined the dazzling offer of the noble virgin bride and her dowry of worldly power. He arrived at Rome; and if his mind, accustomed to nothing more imposing than the rude dwelling of a Northumbrian thane, or the church of wood and wattles,

In Lyons.

* Eddius, the biographer, and Bede agree in this statement. But there are great difficulties in the story. Smith, in his notes on Bede, observes that there is no Delfinus in the list of bishops of Lyons. And in those troubled and lawless times in France, how could a bishop dispose of a civil government of such extent?

expanded at the sight of the cities, which probably, like Lyons, still maintained some of the old provincial magnificence, with what feelings must the stranger have trod the streets of Rome, with all its historical and religious marvels! In Rome the Archdeacon

In Rome.

Boniface, one of the council of the Pope, kindly undertook the care of the young Saxon. He instructed him in the four Gospels, in the Roman rule of keeping Easter, and other points of ecclesiastical discipline, unknown or unpractised in the Anglo-Saxon Church. He was at length presented to the successor of St. Peter, and received his blessing. Under the protection of certain reliques, one of the inestimable advantages which often rewarded a pilgrimage to Rome, Wilfrid returned to his friend the Bishop of Lyons. There he resided three years, and now, tempted no more by secular offers, or acknowledged to be superior to them, he received, at his earnest request, the tonsure according to the Roman form. But Delfinus (so runs the legend) had incurred the animosity of the Queen Bathildis. With eight other bishops he was put to death. Wilfrid stood prepared to share the glorious martyrdom of his friend. His beauty arrested the arm of the executioner; and when it was found that he was a stranger he was permitted to depart in peace.[†]

The young Saxon noble, who had seen so many distant lands—had been admitted to the familiarity of such powerful prelates—had visited Rome, received the

[†] Here is a greater difficulty. The Queen Bathildis is represented by the French historians, not as a Jezebel who slays the prophets of the Lord (as she is called by Eddius), but as a princess of exemplary piety, a devout

servant of the church, and the foundress of monasteries. Ebroin too, the Mayor of the Palace, in this legend is drawn in very dark colours. But on Bathildis and Ebroin more hereafter.

blessing of the Pope, and travelled under the safeguard of holy reliques—was welcomed by his former friend Alchfrid, now the pious king of North-^{In Northumbria.}umbria, with wondering respect. He obtained first a grant of land at a place called *Æstanford*; afterwards a monastery was founded at *Ripon*, and endowed with xxx manses of land, of which Wilfrid was appointed abbot. He was then admitted into the priesthood by Agilbert, the Bishop of Wessex. Colman, the Scottish bishop of Lindisfarne, after his discomfiture in the dispute concerning Easter, retired in disgust and disappointment to his native Iona. Tuta, another Scot, was carried off by the fatal plague, which at this time ravaged Britain. Upon his decease, the Saxon Wilfrid was named by common consent to the Northumbrian bishopric. But the plague had swept away the greater part of the southern prelates. Wina alone, the West-Saxon bishop, was considered by Wilfrid as canonically consecrated; the rest were Scots, who rejected the Roman discipline concerning Easter and the tonsure. Wilfrid went over to France; the firm champion of the Catholic discipline was received with the highest honours. No less than twelve bishops assembled for his consecration at *Compiègne*: he was borne aloft on a gilded chair, supported only by ^{Consecrated at Compiègne.}bishops—no one else was allowed to touch it. He remained some time (it is said three years) among his friends in Gaul.^a On his return to England a wild adventure on the shores of his native land showed how strangely the fiercest barbarism still encountered the progress of civilisation—paganism that of Christianity. The kingdom of Sussex was yet entirely heathen.

^a There may be some confusion in his two periods of residence in Gaul.

Wilfrid was driven by a storm on its coast. The Saxon pirates had become merciless wreckers ; they thought everything cast by the winds and the sea on their coasts their undoubted property, the crew and passengers of vessels driven on shore their lawful slaves. They attacked the stranded bark with the utmost ferocity : the crew of Wilfrid made a gallant resistance. It was a strange scene. On one side the Christian prelate and his clergy were kneeling aloof in prayer ; on the other a pagan priest was encouraging the attack, by what both parties supposed powerful enchantments. A fortunate stone from a sling struck the priest on the forehead, and put an end to his life and to his magic. But his fall only exasperated the barbarians. Thrice they renewed the attack, and thrice were beaten off. The prayers of Wilfrid became more urgent, more needed, more successful.^a The tide came in, the wind shifted ; the vessel got to sea, and reached Sandwich. At a later period of his life Wilfrid nobly revenged himself on this inhospitable people by labouring and with success, in their conversion to Christianity.

On Wilfrid's return to Northumbria, after his long unexplained absence, he found his see preoccupied by Ceadda, a pious Scottish monk, a disciple of the venerated Aidan.^b Wilfrid peaceably retired to his monastery at Ripon. He was soon summoned to more active duties : he obeyed the invitation of Wulfhere, King of Mercia, to extend Christianity in his kingdom. In the

^a Eddius compares the pagan priest to Balaam, the slayer to David, the resistance of this handful of men to that of Gideon, the prayers of Wilfrid to those of Moses and Aaron when

Joshua fought with Amalek.

^b Perhaps after all Wilfrid was only nominated by the Roman party, who, diminished by the plague, may not have been able to support their choice.

south he must have obtained high reputation. On the death of Deus-dedit, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Wilfrid was entrusted with the care of the vacant diocese. On the arrival of Theodorus, who had been invested in the metropolitan dignity at Rome, almost his first act was to annul the election of Ceadda, and to place Wilfrid in the Northumbrian see at York. Ceadda made no resistance; and, as a reward for his piety and his submission, was appointed to the Mercian see of Lichfield.

The Christianity of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, whether from Rome or Iona, was alike monastic. That form of the religion already prevailed in Britain, when invaded by the Saxons, with them retreated into Wales, or found refuge in Ireland. It landed with Augustine on the shores of Kent; and came back again, on the invitation of the Northumbrian king, from the Scottish isles. And no form of Christianity could be so well suited for its high purposes at that time, or tend so powerfully to promote civilisation as well as religion.

The calm example of the domestic virtues in a more polished, but often, as regards sexual inter-
course, more corrupt state of morals, is of Monasticism of the Church inestimable value, as spreading around the parsonage an atmosphere of peace and happiness, and offering a living lesson on the blessings of conjugal fidelity. But such Christianity would have made no impression, even if it could have existed, on a people who still retained something of their Teutonic severity of manners, and required therefore something more imposing—a sterner and more manifest self-denial—to keep up their religious veneration. The detachment of the clergy from all earthly ties left them at once more unremittingly devoted to their unsettled life as missionaries,

more ready to encounter the perils of this wild age; while (at the same time) the rude minds of the people were more struck by their unusual habits, by the strength of character shown in their labours, their mortifications, their fastings, and perpetual religious services. All these being, in a certain sense, monks, the bishops and his clergy cœnobites, or if they lived separate only less secluded and less stationary than other ascetics, wherever Christianity spread, monasteries, or religious foundations with a monastic character arose. These foundations, as the religion aspired to soften the habits, might seem to pacify the face of the land. They were commonly placed, by some intuitive yearning after repose and security, in spots either themselves beautiful by nature, by the bank of the river, in the depth of the romantic wood, under the shelter of the protecting hill; or in such as became beautiful from the superior care and culture of the monks,—the draining of the meadows, the planting of trees, the home circle of garden or orchard, which employed or delighted the brotherhood. These establishments gradually acquired a certain sanctity: if exposed like other lands to the ravages of war, no doubt at times the fear of some tutelary saint, or the influence of some holy man, arrested the march of the spoiler. If the growth of the English monasteries was of necessity gradual, the culture around them but of slow development (agricultural labour does not seem to have become a rule of monastic discipline), it was not from the want of plentiful endowments, or of ardent votaries. Grants of land and of moveables were poured with lavish munificence on these foundations; sometimes tracts of land, far larger than

* Bede calls some of these donations, “stultissimos.”

they could cultivate, and which were thus condemned to sterility. The Scottish monks are honourably distinguished as repressing, rather than encouraging, this prodigality.^d The Roman clergy, if less scrupulous, might receive these tributes not merely as offerings of religious zeal to God, but under a conviction that they were employed for the improvement as well as the spiritual welfare of the people. Nor was it only the sacred mysterious office of ministering at the altar of the new God, it was the austere seclusion of the monks, which seized on the religious affections of the Anglo-Saxon convert. When Christianity first broke upon their rude but earnest minds, it was embraced with the utmost fervour, and under its severest forms. Men were eager to escape the awful punishments, and to secure the wonderful promises of the new religion by some strong effort, which would wrench them altogether from their former life. As the gentler spirit of the Gospel found its way into softer hearts, it made them loathe the fierce and rudely warlike occupations of their forefathers. To the one class the monastery offered its rigid course of ceremonial duty and its ruthless austerities, to the other its repose. Nobles left their halls, queens their palaces, kings their thrones, to win everlasting life by the abandonment of the pomp and the duties of their secular state, and, by becoming churchmen or monks, still to exercise rule, or to atone for years of blind and sinful heathenism.

^d "Aidanus, Finan et Colmannus, minæ sanctitatis fuerunt et parsimoniæ. Adeo enim sacerdotes erant illius tem-
poris ab avaritiâ immunes ut nec territoria, nisi coacti, acceperunt."—Hem. a. Hunting. apud Gale, lib. iii. p. 333.

CHAPTER IV.

Wilfrid — Bede.

WILFRID, the type of his time, blended the rigour of the monk with something of prelatic magnificence. The effect of his visit to more polished countries—to Gaul and Italy—soon appeared in his diocese. He who had seen the churches of Rome and other Italian cities, would not endure the rude timber buildings,^a thatched with reeds—the only architecture of the Saxons—and above which the Scottish monks had not aspired.^b The church of Paulinus at York had been built of stone, but it was in ruins; it was open to the wind and rain, and the birds flew about and built their nests in the roof and walls. Wilfrid repaired the building, roofed it with lead, and filled the windows with glass. The transparency of this unknown material excited great astonishment. At Ripon he built the church from the ground of smoothed stones; it was of great height, and supported by columns and aisles.^c All the chieftains and thanes of the kingdom were invited to the consecration of this church. Wilfrid read from the altar the list of the lands which had been bestowed by former kings, for the salvation of their souls, upon the church, and those which were offered

^a Lappenberg observes that the Anglo-Saxons have no other word for building but *getimbrian*, to work in wood.—*Geschichte Engl.*, i. 170.

^b Eddius, c. xvi.

^c “*Polito lapide a terrâ usque ad summum, ædificatam variis columnis et porticibus suffultam in cultum erexit et consummavit.*” — Eddius, xviii.

that day; and also of the places once dedicated to God by the Britons, and abandoned on their expulsion by the Saxons. This act was meant for the solemn recognition of all existing rights, the encouragement of future gifts, and, it seems, the assertion of vague and latent claims.^d After this Christian or sacerdotal commemoration, there was something of a return to heathen usage, during three days and three nights uninterrupted feasting. But the architectural wonder of the age was the church at Hexham, which was said to surpass in splendour every building on this side of the Alps. The depth to which the foundations were sunk, the height and length of the walls, the richness of the columns and aisles, the ingenious multiplicity of the parts, as it struck the biographer of Wilfrid, give the notion of a building of the later Roman, or, as it is called, Byzantine style, aspiring into something like the Gothic.^e

The friend and companion of Wilfrid at Rome, Benedict Biscop (a monk of Holy Island), was introducing, in a more peaceful and less ostentatious way, the arts and elegancies of life. When about to build his monastery at Wearmouth, he crossed into Gaul to collect masons skilled in working stone after the Roman manner; when the walls were finished, he sent for glaziers, whose art till this time was unknown in Britain.^f Nor was architecture the only art introduced

Benedict
Biscop.

^d Eddius, c. xvi.

^e "Cujus profunditatem in terrâ cum domibus mirificè politis lapidibus fundatam, et super terram multiplicem domum, columnis variis et multis porticibus suffultam, mirabilique altitudine et longitudine murorum ornata, et variis linearum anfractibus viarum aliquando sursum, aliquando

deorsum per cochleas circumductam."

—Eddius, c. xxii.

^f Painted glass seems to have been known at an early period in Gaul,—

"Sub versicoloribus figuris vernans her-
bida crusta,
Sapphiratos flectit per prasinum vitrum
capillos." *Sidon. Apollin.*

This, however, seems a kind of mosaic.

by the pilgrims to Rome. Benedict brought from abroad vessels for the altar, vestments which could not be made in England, and especially two palls, entirely of silk, of incomparable workmanship.^g Books, embellished if not illuminated manuscripts, and paintings, came from the same quarter. Wilfrid's offering to the church of Ripon was a copy of the Gospels, written in letters of gold, on a purple ground.^h Other manuscripts were adorned with gold and precious stones. On each of his visits to Rome Benedict brought less ornamented books; on one occasion a large number: and he solemnly charged his brethren, among his last instructions, to take every precaution for the security and preservation of their library. The pictures, which he brought from Rome, were to adorn two churches, one at Wearmouth, dedicated to St. Peter; one at Jarrow, to St. Paul. These were no doubt the earliest specimens of Christian painting in the country. In the ceiling of the nave at Wearmouth were the Virgin and the twelve apostles; on the south wall subjects from the Gospel history; on the north from the Revelations. Those in St. Paul's illustrated the agreement of the Old and New Testament. In one compartment was Isaac bearing the wood for sacrifice, and below the Saviour bearing his cross.ⁱ

So far Wilfrid rises to his lofty eminence an object of

^g "Vasa sancta, et vestimenta quia domi invenire non poterat loserica."

^h "Auro purissimo in membranis depurpuratis, coloratis."—Eddius, c. xvii.

Bede, after describing the pictures, proceeds: "Quatenus intrantes ecclesiam omnes etiam literarum ignari,

quaquaversum intenderent, vel semper amabilem Christi, sanctorumque ejus, quamvis in imagine contemplarentur aspectum: vel Dominicæ Incarnationis gratiam vigilantiori mente recolerent, vel extremi discrimen ex aminis quasi coram oculis habentes, districtius se ipsi examinare meminerint."—Smith's Bede, p. 295.

universal respect, veneration, and love. On a sudden he is involved in interminable disputes, persecuted with bitter animosity, degraded from his see, an exile from his country, and dies at length, though at mature age, yet worn out with trouble and anxiety. The causes of this reverse are lost in obscurity. It was not the old feud between the Roman and the Scottish clergy, for Theodorus, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Roman party, joins the confederacy against him. As yet the jealousies between the secular and the regular clergy, the priests and monks, which at a later period, in the days of Odo and Dunstan, distracted the Anglo-Saxon Church, had not begun. The royal jealousy of the pomp and wealth of the bishop, which might seem to obscure that of the throne, though no doubt already in some strength, belongs in its intensity to other times. Egfrid, now King of Northumbria, had been alienated from Wilfrid, through his severe advice to the Queen Ethelreda to persist in her vow of chastity. The first husband of Ethelreda had respected the virginity which she had dedicated to God. When compelled to marry Egfrid, she maintained her holy obstinacy, and took refuge, by Wilfrid's connivance, in a convent, to escape her conjugal duties. A new queen, Ercemburga, instead of this docile obedience to Wilfrid, became his bitterest enemy.^k She it was who inflamed her husband with jealousy of the state, the riches, and the pride of the bishop, his wealthy foundations, his splendid buildings, his hosts of followers. Theodorus, the Archbishop of

^k The language ascribed to Ercemburga might apply to a later archbishop of York, the object of royal envy and rapacity. "Enumerans ei . . . omnem gloriam ejus regularem, et

divitias, nec non Cœnobiorum multitudinem, et ædificiorum magnitudinem, innumerumque sodalium exercitum, regalibus vestimentis et armis ornatum.' —This is not Walsey, but Wilfrid.

Canterbury, eagerly accepted the invitation of the King of Northumbria, to assist in the overthrow of Wilfrid.

Theodorus was a foreigner, a Greek of Tarsus, and might perhaps despise this aspiring Saxon. After the death of Archbishop Deus-dedit, the see of Canterbury had remained vacant four years. The kings of Kent and Northumbria

Theodorus
Archbishop
of Canter-
bury.

A.D. 664.

determined to send a Saxon, Wighard, to Rome, to receive consecration. Wighard died at Rome; the Pope Vitalian was urged to supply the loss. His choice fell upon Theodorus, a devout and learned

A.D. 668.

monk. Vitalian's nomination awoke no jealousy, but rather profound gratitude.^m It was not the appointment of a splendid and powerful primate to a great and wealthy church, but a successor to the missionary Augustine. But Theodorus, if he brought not ambition, brought the Roman love of order and of organisation, to the yet wild and divided island; and the profound peace which prevailed might tempt him to reduce the more than octarchy of independent bishops into one harmonious community. As yet there were churches in England, not one Church. Theodorus appears to have formed a great scheme for the submission of the whole island to his metropolitan jurisdiction. He summoned a council at Hertford, which enacted many laws for the regulation of the power of the bishops, the rights of monasteries, on keeping of Easter, on divorces, and unlawful marriages. Archbishop Theodorus began by dividing the great bishoprics

^m "Episcopum quem petierant a Romano Pontifice." There is a violent dispute (compare Lingard, Anglo-Sax. Antiq., and note in Kemble's Anglo-Saxons, ii. 355) upon the nature of

this appointment; all parties, except Mr. Kemble, appear to me to overlook the state of Christianity in England at the time.

in East Anglia and in Mercia, and deposed two refractory prelates. He proceeded on his sole spiritual authority, with the temporal aid of the king, to divide the bishopric of York into three sees; so, by the appointment of three bishops, Wilfrid was entirely superseded in his diocese.^a Wilfrid appealed to Rome, ^{Wilfrid appeals to Rome.} and set out to lay his case before the Pope.^o So deep was the animosity, that his enemies in England are said to have persuaded Theodoric, King of the Franks, and Ebroin, mayor of the palace, to seize the prelate on his journey, and to put his companions to the sword. Winfred, the ejected bishop of Mercia, was apprehended in his stead, and thrown into prison.

The wind was fortunately adverse to Wilfrid, and drove him on the coast of Friesland. The barbarous and pagan people received the holy man with hospitality; their Fisheries that year being ^{In Friesland.} remarkably successful, this was attributed to his presence; and the king, the nobles, and the people, were alike more disposed to listen to the Gospel, first preached among them with Wilfrid's power and zeal. The way was thus prepared for his disciple, Willibrod, and for that remarkable succession of missionaries from England, who, kindred in speech, converted so large a part of Germany to Christianity.

After nearly a year passed in this pious occupation in Friesland, Wilfrid ventured into Gaul, and was favourably received by Dagobert II. Two years elapsed before he found his way to Rome. The Pope ^{A.D. 679. October.} (Agatho) received his appeal, submitted it to a synod, who decided in his favour. Agatho issued

^a Eddius compares Egfrid and Theodorus to Balak and Balaam.—Wilkins, Concil.

^o Eddius says that he left England amid the tears of *many thousands of his monks*.

his mandate for the reinstatement of Wilfrid in his see.

Though the Papal decree denounced excommunication against the layman, degradation and deprivation against the ecclesiastic, who should dare to disobey it, it was received by the King of Northumbria with contempt, and even by Archbishop Theodorus with indifference. Wilfrid, on his return, though armed with the papal authority, which he was accused of having obtained by bribery,^p was ignominiously cast into prison, and kept in solitary confinement. The queen, with the strange mixture of superstition and injustice belonging to the age, plundered him of his reliquary, a talisman which she kept constantly with her, in her own chamber and abroad. Wilfrid's faithful biographer relates many miracles, wrought during his imprisonment. The chains of iron, with which they endeavoured to bind him, shrunk or stretched, so as either not to admit his limbs, or to drop from them. The queen fell ill, and attributed her sickness to the stolen reliquary. She obtained his freedom, and was glad when the dangerous prelate, with his reliques, was safe out of her kingdom.

He fled to Mercia, but the Queen of Mercia was the sister of Egfrid; to Wessex, but there the queen was the sister of Ercemburga; he found no safety. At length he took refuge among the more hospitable pagans of Sussex—the only one of the Saxon kingdoms not yet Christian. The king and the queen, indeed, had both been baptised; the king, Ethelwach, at the persuasion of Wulfhere, King of Mercia,

^p See Eddius for this early instance of the suspected venality of the Roman curia. "Insuper (quod execrabilis erat), defamaverant in animarum suarum perniciem, ut *pretio* dicerent redempta esse scripta, quæ ad salutem observantium ab apostolicâ sede testis nata sunt."—c. xxxiii.

who rewarded his Christianity with the prodigal grant of the Isle of Wight; Eabba, the queen, had been admitted to the sacred rite in Worcestershire. Yet, till the arrival of Wilfrid, they had not attempted to make proselytes among their subjects. They had rested content with their own advantages. A few poor Irish monks at Bosham (near Chichester) had alone penetrated the wild forests and jungles which cut off this barbarous tribe from the rest of England. But their rude hearts opened at once to the eloquence of Wilfrid. He taught them the arts of life as well as the doctrines of the Gospel. For three years this part of the island had suffered by drought, followed by famine so severe, that an epidemic desperation seized the people. They linked themselves by forties or fifties hand in hand, leaped from the rocks, were dashed in pieces, or drowned.¹ Though a maritime people, on a line of sea-coast, they were ignorant of the art of fishing. Wilfrid collected a number of nets, led them out to sea, and so provided them with a regular supply of food. The wise and pious benefactor of the nation was rewarded by a grant of the peninsula of Selsey (the isle of seals). There he built a monastery, and for five years exercised undisturbed his episcopal functions.

A revolution in the west and south of the island increased rather than diminished the influence of Wilfrid. Ceadwalla, a youth of the royal house of Wessex, had lived as an outlaw in the forests

Conquest of
Sussex by
Ceadwalla.

¹ The South Saxons are thus described :

"Gens igitur quædam scopulosis indita terris
Saltibus incutis, et densis horrida dumis
Non facilem propriis aditum præbebat in
arvis,
Gens ignara Dei, simulacris dedita vanis."
Fred-gard, p. 191.

Eddius admits that the South Saxons were *compelled* by the king to abandon their idolatry. According to Bede, they understood catching eels in the rivers.—H. E. iv. 13.

of Chiltern and Anderida. He appeared suddenly in arms, seized the kingdom of the West Saxons, conquered Sussex, and ravaged or subdued parts of Kent. Some obscure relation had subsisted between Ceadwalla (when an exile) and the Bishop Wilfrid.^r Wilfrid's protector, Adelwalch, fell in battle during the invasion of the stranger. After Ceadwalla had completed his conquests by the subjugation of the Isle of Wight, Wilfrid became his chief counsellor, and was permitted by the king, still himself a doubtful Christian, if not a heathen, to convert the inhabitants; and Ceadwalla granted to the Church one-third of the Isle of Wight. The conversion of Ceadwalla is too remarkable to be passed over. It has been attributed to his horror of mind at the barbarous murder of his brother in Kent.^s It was no light and politic conviction, but the deep and intense passion of a vehement spirit. The wild outlaw, the bloody conqueror, threw off his arms, gave up the throne which he had won by such dauntless enterprise and so much carnage. He went to Rome to seek that absolution for his sins, from which no one could so effectually relieve him as the successor of St. Peter. At Rome he was christened by the name of Peter. At Rome he died, and an epitaph, of no ordinary merit for the time, celebrated the first barbarian king, who had left his height of glory and of wealth, his family, his mighty kingdom, his triumphs and his spoils, his thanes, his castles, and his palaces, for the

^r "Sanctus antistes Christi in nonnullis auxiliis et adjumentis sæpe anxiatum exulem adjuvavit et confirmavit."—Eddius, c. 41.

^s According to Henry of Huntingdon, Ceadwalla was not a Christian when he invaded Kent. Wolf (his

brother), a savage marauder, was surprised and burned in a house, in which he had taken refuge, by the Christians of the country. "Post hæc Ceadwalla Rex West Saxoniz, de his et aliis sibi commissis penitens, Romam perrexit."—Apud X. Script. p. 742.

perilous journey and baptism at the hands of St. Peter's successor. His reward had been an heavenly for an earthly crown.^t

Archbishop Theodorus was now grown old, and felt the approach of death; he was seized with remorse for his injustice to the exiled bishop of York. Wilfrid met his advances to reconciliation in a Christian spirit. In London Theodorus declared publicly that Wilfrid had been deposed without just cause; at his decease entrusted his own diocese to his charge, and recommended him as his own successor. Wilfrid either declined the advancement, or, more probably, was unacceptable to the clergy of the South. After a vacancy of two years, the Abbot of Reculver, whose name, Berchtwald, indicates his Saxon descent, was chosen. He was the first native who had filled the see.^u

Wilfrid was again invested in his full rights as Bishop of York. The king, Egfrid, had fallen in battle against the Picts. His successor was ^{Wilfrid reinstated in} York. Aldfrid, who had been educated in piety and learning by certain Irish monks. This, though an excellent school for some Christian virtues, had not taught him humble submission to the lofty Roman pretensions of

^t "Culmen, opes, sobolem, pollentia regna,
triumphos,
Exuvias, proceres, moenia, castra, Lares,
Quæque patrum virtus et quæ congesserat
ipse
Cædwal armipotens liquit amore Dei.
Ut Petrum sedemque Petri rex cerneret
hospes,
Cujus fonte meras sumeret almus aquas,
Splendificumque jubar radianti sumeret
haustu,
Ex quo vivificus fulgor ubique fuit.
Perapiensque alacer reditivæ præmia vitæ
Barbaricam rabiem, nomen et inde suum
Conversus, convertit ovans, Petrumque
vocari,
Sergius Antistes jussit, ut ipse Pater
Fonte renascentis, quem Christi gratia pur-
gans
Protinus ablutum vexit i arce poli.

Mira fides regis! clementia maxima Christi,
Cujus consilium nullus adire potest!
Sospes enim veniens supremo ex orbe
Britanni,
Per varias gentes, per freta, perque vias,
Urbem Romuleam vidit, templumque ver-
endum
Aspexit Petri, mystica dona gerens.
Candidus inter oves Christi sociabilis ivit,
Corpore nam tumulum, mente superna
tenet;
Commūtasse magis sceptrorum insignia
credas,
Quem regnum Christi præmeruisse vides."
Bede, H. E. v. 7.

^u According to the Saxon chronicle and others. Bede calls him a native of Wessex.

Wilfrid. The feud between the king and the bishop broke out anew. Wilfrid pressed some antiquated claims on certain alienated possessions of the Church; the king proposed to erect Ripon into a bishopric independent of York. Wilfrid retired to the court of Mercia.

A general synod of the clergy of the island was held at a place called Eastanfeld. The synod demanded the unqualified submission of Wilfrid to certain constitutions of Archbishop Theodorus. Wilfrid reproached them with their contumacious resistance, during twenty-two years, to the decrees of Rome, and tauntingly inquired whether they would dare to compare their archbishop of Canterbury (then a manifest schismatic) with the successors of St. Peter.* However the clergy might reverence the spiritual dignity of Rome, the name of Rome was probably less imposing to the descendants of the Saxons than to most of the Teutonic tribes. The Saxons had only known the Romans in their decay, as a people whom they had driven from the island. The name was perhaps associated with feelings of contempt rather than of reverence. The king and the archbishop demanded Wilfrid's signature to an act of unconditional submission. Warned by a friendly priest that the design of his enemies was to make him surrender all his rights and pronounce his own degradation, Wilfrid replied with a reservation of his obedience to the canons of the fathers. They then required him to retire to his monastery at Ripon, and not to leave it without the king's

* "Interrogavit eos quâ fronte auderent statutis apostolicis ab Agathone sancto et Benedicto electo, et beato Sergio sanctissimis papis ad Britanniam pro salute animarum directis præ-

ponere, aut eligere decreta Theodori episcopi quæ in discordiâ constituit." So writes Eddius, no doubt present at the synod.

permission ; to give up all the papal edicts in his favour ; to abstain from every ecclesiastical office, and to acknowledge the justice of his own depo-^{Expulsion of Wilfrid.}sition. The old man broke out with a clear and intrepid voice into a protest against the iniquity of depriving him of an office, held for forty years. He recounted his services to the Church. The topics were singularly ill-chosen for the ear of the king. He had extirpated the poisonous plants of Scottish growth, had introduced the true time of keeping Easter, and the orthodox tonsure ; he had brought in the antiphonal harmony : and “ having done all this ” (of his noble apostolic labours, his conversion of the heathen, his cultivation of arts and letters, his stately buildings, his monasteries, he said nothing), “ am I to pronounce my own condemnation ? I appeal in full confidence to the apostolic tribunal.” He was allowed to retire again to the court of Mercia. But his enemies proceeded to condemn him as contumacious. The sentence was followed by his excommunication, with circumstances of more than usual indignity and detestation. Food which had been blessed by any of Wilfrid’s party was to be thrown away as an idol offering ; the sacred vessels which he had used were to be cleansed from the pollution.

But the dauntless spirit of Wilfrid was unbroken, his confidence in the rightful power of the pope unshaken. At seventy years of age he again undertook the dangerous journey to Italy, again presented himself before the pope, John V. A second decree was pronounced in his favour. On his return, the archbishop, overawed, or less under the influence of the Northumbrian king, received him with respect. But the king, Aldfrid, refused all concession. “ I will not alter one word of a sentence issued by myself, the archbishop, and all the

dignitaries of the land, for a writing coming, as ye say, from the apostolic chair." The death of Aldfrid followed; it was attributed to the divine vengeance; and it was also given out that, on his deathbed, he had expressed deep contrition for the wrongs of Wilfrid. On the accession of Osred a new synod was held on the

A.D. 705.

banks of the Nid. The archbishop Berchtwald appeared with Wilfrid, and produced the apostolic decree, confirmed by the papal excommunication of all who should disobey it. The prelates and thanes seemed disposed to resist; they declared their reluctance to annul the solemn decision of the synod at Eastanfeld. The abbess Alfreda, the sister of the late king, rose, and declared the deathbed penitence of Aldfrid for his injustice. She was followed by the ealdorman, Berchfrid, the protector of the realm during the king's minority, who declared that, when hard pressed in battle by his enemies, he had vowed, if God should vouchsafe his deliverance, to espouse Wilfrid's cause. That deliverance was a manifest declaration of God in favour of Wilfrid. Amity was restored, the bishops interchanged the kiss of peace; Wilfrid reassumed the monasteries of Ripon and Hexham. The few last years of his life (he lived to the age of 76) soon glided away. He died in another monastery, which he had founded at Oundle; his remains were conveyed with great pomp to Ripon.

Death of
Wilfrid.
A.D. 709.

So closes the life of Wilfrid, and the first period of Christian history in England. The sad scenes of sacerdotal jealousy and strife, which made his course almost a constant feud and himself an object of unpopularity, even of persecution, are lost in the spectacle of the blessings conferred by Christianity on our Saxon ancestors. Even the wild cast of religious adventure in

his life was more widely beneficial than had been a more tranquil course. As the great Prelate of the North, as a missionary, his success showed his unrivalled qualifications. As a bishop, he provoked hostility by an ecclesiastical pomp which contrasted too strongly with the general poverty, and his determination to enforce strict conformity to the authority of Rome offended the converts of the Scottish monks. His banishment into wild pagan countries and his frequent journeys to Rome, were advantageous, though in a very different manner, the former among the rude tribes to whom he preached the Gospel, the latter to his native land. He never returned to England without bringing something more valuable than Papal edicts in his own favour.*

The hatred of the churchmen of this time might seem reserved for each other; to all besides their influence was that of pure Christian humanity. Their quarrels died with them; the civilisation which they introduced, the milder manners, the letters, the arts, the sciences survived. On the estates which the prodigal generosity of the kings, especially when they gained them from their heathen neighbours, bestowed on the Church, the immediate manumission of the slaves could not but tend to mitigate the general condition of that class. Some of these were probably of British descent, and so Christianity might allay even that inveterate national hostility. Nor were their own predial slaves alone directly benefited by the influence of the Churchmen. The redemption of slaves was one of the objects for which the canons allowed the alienation of their lands.

* Compare Kemble's *Anglo-Saxons*, ii. 432 *et seqq.* I was glad to find that I had anticipated the high authority of Mr. Kemble.

Among the pious acts by which a wealthy penitent might buy off the corporal austerities demanded by the discipline of the Church, was the enfranchisement of his slaves. The wealth which flowed into the Church at that time in so full a stream was poured forth again in various channels for the public improvement and welfare.⁷ The adversaries of Wilfrid, as well as his friends, like Benedict Biscop, were his rivals in this generous strife for the advancement of knowledge and civility. Theodorus, the archbishop, was a Greek by birth; perhaps his Greek descent made him less servilely obedient to Rome. While the other ecclesiastics were introducing the Roman literature with the Roman service, Theodorus founded a school in Canterbury for the study of Greek. He bestowed on this foundation a number of books in his native language, among them a fine copy of Homer.

The rapid progress of Christianity and her attendant civilisation, appear from the life and occupations of Bede. Not much more than seventy years after the landing of Augustine on the savage, turbulent, and heathen island, in a remote part of one of the northern kingdoms of the Octarchy, visited many years later by its first Christian teacher, a native Saxon is devoting a long and peaceful life to the cultivation of letters, makes himself master of the whole range of existing knowledge in science and history as well as in theology; and writes Latin both in prose and verse, in a style equal to that of most of his contemporaries. Nor did Bede stand alone; the study of letters was promoted with equal activity by Archbishop Theodorus,

Bede born
673, died 735.

⁷ Burke observes, "They extracted the fruits of virtue even from crimes, and whenever a great man expiated his private offences, he provided in the same act for the public happiness."—*Abridgment of Eng. Hist. Works*, x. p. 268.

and by Adrian, who having declined the archbishopric, accompanied Theodorus into the island. Aldhelm² of Malmesbury was only inferior in the extent of his acquirements, as a writer of Latin poetry far superior to Bede.

The uneventful life of Bede was passed in the monastery under the instructor of his earliest youth, Benedict Biscop. Its obscurity, as well as the extent of his labours, bears witness to its repose.^a Bede stood aloof from all active ecclesiastical duties, and mingled in none of the ecclesiastical disputes. It was his office to master, and to disseminate through his writings, the intellectual treasures brought from the continent by Benedict.

Even if Bede had been gifted with original genius, he was too busy in the acquisition of learning to allow it free scope. He had the whole world of letters to unfold to his countrymen. He was the interpreter of the thoughts of ages to a race utterly unacquainted even with the names of the great men of pagan or of Christian antiquity.

The Christianity of the first converts in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms was entirely ritual. The whole theology of some of the native teachers was contained in the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Some of them were entirely ignorant of Latin, and for them Bede himself

² Aldhelm was born about 656, died 709.

^a The Pope Sergius is said to have invited Bede to Rome in order to avail himself of the erudition of so great a scholar. This invitation is doubted. — See Stevenson's *Bede*, on another reading in the letter adduced by William of Malmesbury. I agree

with Mr. Wright (*Biograph. Lit.* p. 265), that it is more probable the Pope should send for Bede than for a nameless monk from the monastery at Wearmouth. It is nearly certain that Bede did not go to Rome. The death of Pope Sergius accounts very naturally for Bede's disobedience to the papal mandate, or courteous invitation.

translated these all-sufficient manuals of Christian faith into Anglo-Saxon.^b Bede was the parent of theology in England. Whatever their knowledge, the earlier foreign bishops were missionaries, not writers; and the native prelates were in general fully occupied with the practical duties of their station. The theology of Bede flowed directly from the fountain of Christian doctrine, the sacred writings. It consists in commentaries on the whole Bible. But his interpretation is that which now prevailed universally in the Church. By this the whole volume is represented as a great allegory. Bede probably did little more than select from the more popular Fathers, what appeared to him the most subtle and ingenious, and therefore most true and edifying exposition. Even the New Testament, the Gospels, and Acts, have their hidden and mysterious, as well as their historical, signification. No word but enshrines a religious and typical sense.^c

The science as the theology of Bede was that of his age—the science of the ancients (Pliny was the author chiefly followed), narrowed rather than expanded by the natural philosophy, supposed to be authorised and established by the language of the Bible.^d Bede had

^a See the letter of Bede to Bishop Egbert, in which he enjoins him to enforce the learning these two forms by heart: "Quod non solum de laicis, id est, in populari vitâ constitutis, verum etiam de clericis sive monachis, qui Latine sunt linguæ expertes, fieri oportet." He urges their efficacy against the assaults of unclean spirits.—Smith's Bede, p. 306.

^c "De rerum natura," in Giles, vol. vi.

^d It is this Christian part of Bede's

natural philosophy which alone has much interest, as showing the interworking of the biblical records of the creation, now the popular belief, into the old traditionary astronomy derived by the Romans from the Greeks; and so becoming the science of Latin Christendom. The creation by God, the creation in six days, is of course the groundwork of Bede's astronomical science. The earth is the centre and primary object of creation. The heaven is of a fiery and subtle nature,

read some of the great writers, especially the poets of antiquity. He had some familiarity with Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, and even Lucretius. This is shown in his treatises on Grammar and Metre. His own poetry is the feeble echo of humbler masters, the Christian poets, Prudentius, Sedulius, Arator, Juvenius, which were chiefly read in the schools of that time. It may be questioned, however, whether many of the citations from ancient authors, often adduced from mediæval writers, as indicating their knowledge of such authors, are more than traditionary, almost proverbial, insulated passages, brilliant fragments, broken off from antiquity, and reset again and again by writers borrowing them

round, equidistant in every part, as a canopy, from the centre of the earth. It turns round every day, with ineffable rapidity, only moderated by the resistance of the seven planets,—three above the sun : Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, then the Sun ; three below : Venus, Mercury, the Moon. The stars go round in their fixed courses ; the northern perform the shortest circle. The highest heaven has its proper limit ; it contains the angelic virtues, who descend upon earth, assume ethereal bodies, perform human functions, and return. The heaven is tempered with glacial waters, lest it should be set on fire ; the inferior heaven is called the firmament, because it separates these superincumbent waters from the waters below. These firmamental waters are lower than the spiritual heavens, higher than all corporeal beings, reserved, some say, for a second deluge, others more truly, to temper the fire of the stars. The rest of Bede's system on the motions

of the planets and stars, on winds, thunder, light, the rainbow, the tides, belongs to the history of philosophy.. His work on the Nature of Things is curious as showing a monk, on the wild shores of Northumberland, so soon after the Christianisation of the island, busying himself with such profound questions, if not observing, recording the observations of others on the causes of natural phenomena learning all that he could learn, teaching all he had learned, in the Latin of his time ; promoting at least, and pointing the way to these important studies. Bede's chronological labours (he was a strenuous advocate for the shorter Hebrew chronology of the Old Testament, in order to establish his favourite theory, so long dominant in theology, of the six ages of the world) implied and displayed powers of calculation rare at that time in Latin Christianity, in England probably unrivalled, if not standing absolutely alone. —Epist. ad Pleguin., Giles, i. p. 145.

from each other, but who had never read another word of the lost poet, orator, or philosopher.

The works of Bede were written for a very small intellectual aristocracy. To all but a few among the monks and clergy, Latin was a foreign language, in which they recited, with no clear apprehension of its meaning, the ordinary ritual.^e

But even at this earlier period, Christianity seized and pressed into her service the more effective vehicle of popular instruction, the vernacular poetry. No doubt from the first there must have been some rude preaching in the vulgar tongue, but the extant Anglo-Saxon homilies are of a later date. Cædmon, however, the greatest of the Anglo-Saxon poets, flourished during the youth of Bede. So marvellous did the songs of Cædmon (pouring forth as they did the treasures of biblical poetry, the sublime mysteries of the Creation, the Fall, the wonders of the Hebrew history, the gentler miracles of the New Testament, the terrors of the judgement, the torments of hell, the bliss of heaven) sound to the popular ear, that they could be attributed to nothing less than divine inspiration. The youth and early aspirations of Cædmon were invested at once in a mythic character like the old poets of India and of Greece, but in the form of Christian miracle.

The Saxons, no doubt, brought their poetry from their native forests. Their bards were a recognised order: in all likelihood in the halls of the kings of the

* See above, quotation from Epist. to Egbert. Bede adds, that for this purpose he had himself translated the Creed and Lord's Prayer into the vernacular Anglo-Saxon. "Propter quod et ipse multis sæpe sacerdotibus

idiotis, hæc quoque utraque, et symbolum videlicet, et Dominicam orationem, in linguam Anglorum translata obtuli."—Epist. ad Egbert. Bede's birth is uncertain; he died about 680.

Octarchy, the bard had his seat of honour, and while he quaffed the mead, sang the victories of the thanes and kings over the degenerate Roman and fugitive Briton. Of these lays some fragments remain, earlier probably than the introduction of Christianity, but tinged with Christian allusion in their later tradition from bard to bard: such are the battle of Conisborough, the Traveller's Song, and the Romance of Beowulf.^f The profoundly religious mind of Cædmon could not endure to learn these profane songs of adventure and battle, or the lighter and more mirthful strains. When his turn came to sing in the hall, and the harp was handed to him, he was wont to withdraw in silence and in shame.^g One evening he had retired from the hall; it was that night his duty to tend the cattle; he fell asleep. A form appeared to him in a vision and said, "Sing, O Cædmon!" Cædmon replied, "that he knew not how to sing, he knew no subject for a song." "Sing," said the visitant, "the Creation." The thoughts and the words flashed upon the mind of Cædmon, and the next morning his memory retained the verses, which Bede thought so sublime in the native language as to be but feebly rendered in the Latin.

The wonder reached the ears of the famous Hilda, the abbess of Whitby: it was at once ascribed to the grace of God. Cædmon was treated as one inspired. He could not read, he did not understand Latin. But when any passage of the Bible was interpreted to him, or any of the sublime truths of religion unfolded, he sat for some time in quiet rumination, and poured it

^f Kemble's Beowulf, with preface.

^g "Unde nonnunquam in conviviliis, cum esset lætitiæ causâ, et omnes per ordinem cantare deberent, ille ubi

appropinquare sibi citharam cernebat, surgebat a mediâ cœnâ, et egressus ad suam domum repedabat." — Bede, H. E. iv. c. 24.

all forth in that brief alliterative verse, which kindled and enchanted his hearers. Thus was the whole history of the Bible, and the whole creed of Christianity, in the imaginative form which it then wore, made at once accessible to the Anglo-Saxon people. Cædmon's poetry was their bible, no doubt far more effective in awakening and changing the popular mind than a literal translation of the Scriptures could have been. He chose, by the natural test of his own kindred sympathies, all which would most powerfully work on the imagination, or strike to the heart of a rude yet poetic race.

The Anglo-Saxon was the earliest vernacular Christian poetry, a dim prophecy of what that poetry might become in Dante and Milton. While all the Greek and Latin poetry laboured with the difficulties of an uncongenial diction and form of verse; and at last was but a cold dull paraphrase of that which was already, in the Greek and in the Vulgate Bible, far nobler poetry, though without the technical form of verse; the Anglo-Saxon had some of the freedom and freshness of original poetry. Its brief, sententious, and alliterative cast seemed not unsuited to the parallelism of the Hebrew verse; and perhaps the ignorance of Cædmon kept him above the servility of mere translation.^h

Aldhelm of Malmesbury was likewise skilled in the vernacular poetry, but though he used it for the purpose of religious instruction, it does not seem to have been written verse, though one of his songs survived in the popular voice for some time.ⁱ What he no doubt

^h The poetry of Cædmon may be judged by the admirable translations in the volume on Anglo-Saxon poetry by J. J. Coneybeare. The whole has been edited, with his fulness of Anglo-Saxon learning, by Mr. Thorpe; London, 1832. Mr. Coneybeare may to a certain degree have Miltonised the simple Anglo-Saxon; but he has not done more than justice to his vigour and rude boldness.

ⁱ "Nativæ quippe linguæ non

considered the superior majesty or sanctity of the Latin was alone suited for such mysterious subjects. Of Adhelm it is recorded that he saw with sorrow the little effect which the services of religion had on the peasantry, who either listened with indifference to the admonitions of the preacher, or returned home utterly forgetful of his words. He stationed himself therefore on a bridge over which they must pass, in the garb of a minstrel, and when he had arrested the crowd and fully enthralled their attention by the sweetness of his song, he gradually introduced into his profane and popular lay some of the solemn truths of religion. Thus he succeeded in awakening a deeper devotion and won many hearts to the faith, which he would have attempted in vain to move by severer language, or even by the awful excommunication of the church. What he himself no doubt despised, his vernacular verse, in comparison with the lame stateliness of his poor hexameters, ought to have been his pride.

Among a people accustomed to the association of music, however rude, with their poetry, the choral service of the church must have been peculiarly impressive. The solemn Gregorian system of chanting

negligeat carmina, adeo ut teste libro Elfredi, de quo superius dixi, nullâ unquam ætate par ei fuerat uspiam poesin Anglicam posse facere, tantum componere, eadem appositè vel canere vel dicere. Denique commemorat Elfredus carmen triviale Adhelmum fecisse; adjiciens causam qua probet rationaliter tantum virum his quæ videntur frivola instituisse. Populum eo tempore semibarbarum, parum divinis sermonibus intentum, statim cantatis missis domos cursitare

solitum: ideoque sanctum virum, super pontem qui rura et urbem continuat, abeuntibus se opposuisse obicem, quasi artem cantandi professum. Eo plus quam semel facto, plebis favorem et concursum emeritum hoc commento, sensim inter ludicra verbis scripturarum insertis, cives ad sanitatem reduxisse, qui si severè et cum excommunicatione agendum putasset, profecto profecisset nihil."—W. Malmesb. Vit. Adhelm.; Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, p. 4.

was now established in Rome, and was introduced into England by the Roman clergy and by those who visited Rome, with zealous activity. Here, though opposed on some points, Archbishop Theodorus and Wilfrid acted in perfect amity.^k In Kent the music of the church had almost from the first formed a part of the divine worship, and James the Deacon, the companion of Paulinus, had taught it in Northumbria. It is recorded to the praise of Theodorus that on his visitation throughout the island he introduced everywhere that system of chanting which had hitherto been practised in Kent alone; and among the important services to the church, of which Wilfrid boasted before the synod of Eastrefield, is the introduction of antiphonal chanting.^l So much importance was attached to this part of the service, that Pope Agatho permitted John, the chief of the Roman choir, to accompany Benedict Biscop to England^m in order to instruct the monks of Wearmouth in singing: John gave lessons throughout Northumbria.

Even at this early period the Anglo-Saxon laws are strongly impregnated with the dominant Christianity: they are the laws of kings, whose counsellors, if not their co-legislators, are prelates. In those of King Ina of Wessex, either the parent or the priest is bound to bring, or force to be brought, the infant to holy baptism within thirty days, under a penalty of thirty shillings;ⁿ if he should die unbaptised, the wehrgeld of this spiritual death is the whole possessions of the guilty

^k Bede, H. E. iv. 2.

^l "Aut quomodo juxta ritum primitivæ ecclesiæ consono vocis modulamine binis astantibus choris per-sultare, responsoriis antiphonisque reciprocis instruerem." — Eddius, c. 45.

^m Bede, H. E. iv. 18. On this and on the pictures brought from Rome on more than one occasion, compare Wright, *Biographia Literaria*, Life of B. Biscop.

ⁿ Thorpe, vol. i. p. 103; Kemble, ii. 490 *et seqq.* et append. D.

person. Spiritual relationship was placed in the same rank with natural affinity. The godfather claimed the wehrgeld for the death of his godson, the godson for that of the godfather. Sunday was hallowed by law. The slave who worked by his lord's command was free, and the lord paid a fine ; if by his own will, without his lord's knowledge, he suffered corporal chastisement. If the free man worked on the holy day without his lord's command, he lost his freedom or paid a compensation of sixty shillings.

Already the awful church had acquired a recognised right of sanctuary. The nature of kirk shot, a payment of certain corn and seed as first fruits, is somewhat obscure, whether paid to the church as the church, or to the church only from lands held of the church. The laws of Kent during the archiepiscopate of Berchtwald, protect the Sabbath, punish certain immoralities, and guarantee all grants of land to the church : there are even exemptions from secular imposts.

Thus, then, in less than a century and a half from the landing of Augustine to the death of Bede, above half a century before the conflicting A.D. 597-735. kingdoms were consolidated into one monarchy, every one of these kingdoms had become Christian. Each had its bishop or bishops. Kent had its metropolitan see of Canterbury and the bishopric of Rochester ; Essex, London ; East Anglia, Dunwich, afterwards, under Archbishop Theodorus, Elmham, removed later to Norwich ; late-converted Sussex had Selsey ; Wessex, Winchester, afterwards also Sherburn. The great kingdom of Mercia at first was subject to the single Bishop of Lichfield ; Leicester, Worcester, Hereford, and Sidmanchester in Lindesay were severed from that vast diocese. The province of York, according to Archbishop

Theodorus' scheme, was to comprehend York, Hexham, and Lindisfarne. Hexham fell in the Danish invasions; Lindisfarne was removed to Durham; a see at Ripon saw but one bishop; the modern bishopric of Carlisle may be considered the successor of the bishopric of Witherne in Galloway. Above these rose the Metropolitan of Canterbury; after some struggle for its independence that of York. As in all the Teutonic kingdoms the hierarchy became a co-ordinate aristocracy, taking their seats as representatives of the nation in the witenagemote,^o counsellors of the king as great territorial lords, sitting later as nobles with the earls, as magistrates with the ealdermen. Besides their share in the national councils, as a separate body they hold their own synods, in which they enact laws for all their Christian subjects—at Hertford, at Hatfield, at Cloveshoo probably near Tewkesbury (Cloveshoo was appointed as the place of meeting for an annual synod), later at Calcuith, supposed to be in Kent. Peaceful monasteries arise in all quarters; monasteries in the strict sense, and also conventual establishments, in which the clergy dwell together, and from their religious centres radiate around and disseminate Christianity through the land. Each great church, certainly each cathedral, had its monastery, the priests of which were not merely the officiating clergy of the church, but the missionaries in all the surrounding districts. Christianity became the law of the land, the law underwent the influence of Christianity. The

^o As in all the Teutonic kingdoms, the province of the Witan, or parliament, and the synod, were by no means distinctly comprehended or defined. The great national council,

the Witan, in its sovereign capacity, passed laws on ecclesiastical subjects; the synods, at least occasionally, trench on the civil laws

native Teutonic religion, except in a few usages and superstitions, has absolutely disappeared. The heathen Danes, when they arrive, find no vestige of their old kindred faith in tribes sprung not many centuries before from the same Teutonic races. The Roman arts, which the fierce and savage Jutes and Angles had obliterated from the land, revive in another form. Besides the ecclesiastical Latin, a Teutonic literature has begun; the German bards have become Christian poets. No sooner has Anglo-Saxon Britain become one (no doubt her religious unity must have contributed, if imperceptibly, yet in a great degree to her national unity) than she takes her place among the confederation of European kingdoms.

CHAPTER V.

Conversion of the Teutonic Races beyond the Roman Empire.

WHILE the early Christianity of these islands retired before the Saxon conquerors to Wales, to the Scottish Hebrides, and to Ireland, and looked on the heathen invaders as hopeless and irreclaimable Pagans, beyond the pale of Christian charity, and from whom it was a duty, the duty of irreconcilable hatred, to withhold the Gospel, that faith was flowing back upon the continent of Europe in a gentle but almost continuous tide. In Anglo-Saxon England it was only after a century, that, on the invitation of the Northumbrian king already converted by Roman missionaries, the monks from Iona, and from some, perhaps, of the Irish monasteries, left their solitudes, and commenced their mission of love.

But already, even before the landing of Augustine in England, an Irish monk has found his way to the continent, and is commencing the conversion of German tribes in a region, if within the older frontier of the Roman territory, reduced again to the possession of heathen Teutonic tribes: and from that time out of these islands go forth the chief apostles of Germany. Columban is the forerunner, by at least a century, of the holy Boniface.*

It is difficult to conceive the motives which led forth

* Columban lived at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century.

these first pious wanderers from their native land. Columban, at his outset, was no missionary, S. Columban. urged by a passionate or determined zeal to convert Pagan nations to the Cross of Christ; nor was he a pilgrim, lured forth from his retreat by the unconquerable desire of visiting the scenes of apostolic labours, the spiritual wonders of Rome, or to do homage to the reliques of Saints or Apostles. He and his followers seemed only to seek a safe retreat in which he might shroud his solitary devotion; or, if his ascetic fame should gather around him an increasing number of disciples, form a cœnobitic establishment. They might have found, it might be supposed, retirement not less secure against secular intrusion, as wild, as silent, as holy, in the yet peaceful Ireland, or in the Scottish islands, as in the mountains of the Vosges or the valleys of the Alps.^b

But the influence of Columban, as the parent of so many important monasteries on the borders and within the frontier of Teutonic Paganism, as well as the reverence with which his holy character was invested, and which enabled him to assert the moral dignity of Christianity with such intrepidity, are events, which strongly mark the religious history of this age. The stranger monk issues from his retreat to rebuke the vices of kings, confronts the cruel Brunehaut, and such is the fearful sanctity which environs the man of God, that even her deadly hostility can venture nothing beyond his banishment.

Columban was born in Leinster, at the period when Ireland is described as a kind of Hesperian elysium of peace and piety. His early aspirations after monastic

^b Mabillon, *Ann Benedict.*, vol. i. p. 191.

holiness were fostered in the convent of Banchor, on the coast of Ulster. He became a proficient in the mystic piety of the day. But he was suddenly seized with the desire of foreign travel; he wrung an unwilling consent to his departure from his spiritual father, Comgal, abbot of Banchor. He just touched on, but shrunk from, the contaminated shores of Paganised Britain, and landed in Gaul. The fame of his piety reached the ears of one of the kings of the land: all that Columban requested was permission to retire into some unapproachable wilderness.

The woody mountains of the Vosges rose on the frontiers of the kingdoms of Austrasia and of Burgundy. Tribes of Pagan Suevians then occupied that part of Switzerland which bordered on those kingdoms. War and devastation had restored as solitudes to nature districts which had been reclaimed to culture and fertility by the industry of Roman colonists. It was on the site of ancient towns that hermits now found their wildernesses. Columban, with his twelve followers, first settled among the ruins of a small town called Anegratis. The woods yielded herbs and roots and the bark of trees for food, the streams water and probably fish. But the offerings of piety were not wanting; provisions were sent by those who were desirous of profiting by the prayers of these holy men. But the heart of Columban yearned for still more profound solitude. In the depths of the wild woods, about seven miles off, as he wandered with his book, he found a cave, of which the former inhabitant, a bear, gave up quiet possession to the saint—for the wild beasts, wolves as well as bears, and the Pagan Suevians, respected the man of God. Miracle as usual arose around the founder of a monastery. The fame of the piety and wonder-

In Alsace,
about A.D.
590.

working powers of Columban gathered a still increasing number of votaries; the ruins of Anegratis could no longer contain the candidates for the monastic life.

About eight miles distant lay the more extensive ruins of a fortified Roman town, Luxovium,^c now overgrown with the wild forest jungle, but formerly celebrated for its warm springs. Amid the remains of splendid baths and other stately buildings, Columban determined to establish a more regular monastery. The forest around is said to have been strewn with marble statues, and magnificent vestiges of the old Pagan worship. On this wreck of heathenism rose the monastery of Luxeuil. Neophytes crowded from all parts; the nobles of the court threw off their arms, or fled from the burthensome duties of civil life to this holy retreat. A second establishment became necessary, and in a beautiful spot, watered by several streams, rose the succursal abbey of Fontaines. Columban presided as abbot over all these institutions. His delight was ever to wander alone in the woods, or to dwell for days in his lonely cave. But he still exercised strict superintendence over all the monasteries of the Rule which he had formed; he mingled in and encouraged their useful labours in husbandry, it was thought, with more than human wisdom and sagacity.

But peace was not to be found even in the lonely forests of the Vosges. After twelve years of undisturbed repose, religious disputes invaded the quiet shades of

* "Invenitque castrum firmissimo munimine olim fuisse cultum, a supradicto loco distans plus minus octo millibus quem prisca tempora Luxovium appellabant: ibique aquæ calidæ cultu eximio extractæ habebantur.

Ibi imaginum lapidearum densitas vicinos saltus densabat, quas cultu miserabili rituque profano vetusta paganorum templa honorabant."—Jonas, Vit. Columb., c. 9.

Luxeuil. Columban was arraigned before a synod of Gaulish bishops for his heterodox usage about keeping Easter, in which he adhered to the old British discipline. Columban answered with a kind of pathetic dignity, "I am not the author of this difference. I came as a stranger to this land for the sake of our common Lord and Saviour Christ. I beseech you by that common Lord who shall judge us all, to allow me to live in silence, in peace, and in charity, as I have lived for twelve years, beside the bones of my seventeen departed brethren. Let Gaul receive into her bosom all those who, if they deserve it, will be received into the kingdom of heaven."

Columban had to wage a nobler strife against the vices of the neighbouring court. The famous Brunehaut and King Thierry. Brunehaut had fled from the kingdom of the elder of her royal grandchildren, Theodebert of Austrasia, and taken refuge with the younger, Thierry, King of Burgundy. She ruled the realm by the ascendancy of that strong and unscrupulous mind which for above forty years had raised her into a rival of that more famous Fredegonde, her rival in the number of her paramours, and in the number of murders which she had perpetrated.^d She ruled the king through his vices. Thierry had degenerated, like the rest of the race of Clovis, from the old Teutonic virtues, and plunged headlong into Roman licence. In vain his subjects had attempted to wean him from his countless mistresses by a marriage with the daughter of the Visigothic king.

^d It was not till 613 that she met with a death horrible as her own crimes. Exposed on a camel to the derision of the camp of her enemy, King Chlotaire, she was tied to tail of a wild horse, and literally torn to shreds.—H. Martin, p. 169. What wonder that in such days men sought refuge in the wilderness, and almost adored hermits like Columban!

Neglected, mortified, persecuted by the arts of Brunehaut, the unhappy princess returned to her home. Already Brunehaut had resisted the remonstrances of Didier, Bishop of Vienne, who had rebuked the incontinence of Thierry and his ill-usage of his wife. Didier was murdered on his road from Lyons to Vienne. The fame of Columban induced Thierry to visit his saintly retirement. Columban seized the opportunity to reproach him for his adulteries, and to persuade him that the safety of his realm depended on his having a legitimate heir. Thierry listened with awe to the man of God; he promised to act according to his wise counsels. Even Brunehaut, the murderer of bishops, dared not lay her hand on him. Brunehaut saw her power in danger. Whether she sought the interview in the vain hope of softening him by her blandishments, or whether he came of his own accord, Columban visited the queen in her palace. The stern virtue of the saint was not to be moved. Brunehaut approached him, and entreated his blessing on two illegitimate sons of Thierry. (The benediction of the saint seems to have had some connexion with their hopes of succession to the throne; to which, according to Frankish usage, legitimacy was not indispensable.) "These bastards, born in sin," replied Columban, "shall never inherit the kingdom." He passed away unmolested through the awe-struck court. Brunehaut began a petty and vexatious warfare, by cutting off the supplies from the monasteries, and stirring up jealousies with other neighbouring convents. Either to remonstrate, or to avert the royal anger, Columban again approached the court, then held at the village of Epaisses,*

* The villa Brocarica, Bourcheresse, between Châlons and Autun --H. Martin, *Histoire de la France*, ii. 169.

but he refused to enter under the roof. Thierry ordered a royal banquet to be prepared and sent out to the saint at the door. "It is written," said Columban, "that God abhors the offerings of the wicked; his servants must not be polluted with food given by those who persecute his saints." He dashed the wine on the earth and scattered about the other viands. The affrighted king again promised amendment, but abstained not from his notorious adulteries. Columban then addressed to him a letter, in which he lashed his vices with unsparing severity, and threatened him with excommunication.^f The king could bear no more; he appealed to his nobles, he appealed to his bishops, knowing no doubt their jealousy of the stranger monk and their dislike of some of his usages. He demanded free ingress and egress for his servants into the monastery. Columban haughtily replied, "that if he dared thus to infringe the monastic rule, his kingdom would fall, and his whole race be cut off." When Thierry himself attempted to enter the refectory, he shrunk before the intrepid demeanour and terrible language of the abbot. Yet with some shrewdness he observed, "Do not think that I will gratify your pride by making you a martyr." To a sentence of banishment the stranger monk replied, that he would not be driven from his monastery but by force. At length
Columban
banished. a man was found who did not quail before the saint. Columban was arrested, and carried to Besançon; but even there his guards, from awe, performed their duty so negligently that he escaped and returned to Luxeuil. Again he was seized, not without difficulty, and carried off amid the lamentations of his

^f Jonas describes the letter as "*verberibus plenas.*"

faithful followers. Two or three Irish monks alone were permitted to accompany him. He was hurried in rude haste towards Nantes: at Orleans he was not allowed to enter the church, hardly permitted to visit the shrine of St. Martin at Tours; and embarked on board a vessel bound to Ireland.

During all this journey the harsh usage of the royal officers was mitigated by the wondering reverence of the people: it is described as a continued scene of miracle. The language attributed to Columban by his admiring biographer shows not only the privilege assumed by the monastic saints of that day, of dispensing with the humble tone of meekness and charity, but also the fearless equality, or rather superiority, with which a foreign monk thus addresses the kings of the land. "Why are you retiring hitherward?" said the Bishop of Tours. "Because that dog Thierri has driven me away from my brethren." To another he said, "Tell thy friend Thierri that within three years he and his children shall perish, and God will root up his whole race." In those days such prophecies concerning one of the royal families of the Franks was almost sure of fulfilment.

Journey
through
France.

Return to
France.

Columban was justified in the estimation of men, even of kings, in taking this lofty tone. The vessel in which he was embarked was cast back on the coast of Neustria. The King Clothaire II. humbly solicited the saint to hallow his kingdom by making it his residence. Columban declined the offer, and passed into Austrasia, where King Theodebert received him with the same respectful deference.

The monks from Luxeuil flocked around their beloved master; but Columban declined likewise the urgent entreaties of Theodebert to bless his kingdom by the

establishment of a monastery. He yearned for wilder solitudes. With his followers he went to Moguntiacum (Mentz), and embarked upon the Rhine. They worked their way up the stream till they reached the mouth of the Limmat, and followed that river into the lake of Zurich. From the shores of the lake they went by

land to Tugium (the modern Zug). Around
Zug. them were the barbarous heathen Suevians.

Columban and his disciples had little of the gentle and winning perseverance of missionaries; they had been accustomed to dictate to trembling sovereigns. Their haughty and violent demeanour, which overawed those who had been brought up in Christianity, provoked the Pagans, instead of weaning them from their idolatries. A strange tale is told of a huge vat of beer, offered to the god Woden, which burst at the mere breath of Columban. St. Gall, his companion,^g set their temples on fire, and threw their idols into the lake. The monks were compelled to fly; and Columban left the Pagans of that district with a most unapostolic malediction, devoting their whole race to temporal misery and eternal perdition.^h They retreated to Arbon, on the lake of Constance; there, from a Christian priest, named Willimar, they heard of a ruined Roman city at the end of

the lake, named Brigetium (Bregenz). At
Bregenz.

Brigetium Columban found a ruined church dedicated to St. Aurelia, which he rebuilt. But the chief objects of worship in the re-Paganised land were three statues of gilded brass. St. Gall preached to the people

^g The history of St. Gall is related in more than one form in Pertz, tom. ii. p. 1-34.

^h "Fiant nati eorum in interitum; ergo ad mediam ætatem cum per-

venerint stupor ac dementia eos apprehendant, ita ut alieno ære oppressi, ignominiam suam agnoscant conversi."

—Vita S. Galli, apud Pertz, ii p. 7.

in their own language. He then broke their idols in pieces, and threw them into the water : part of his hearers applauded, but some departed in undisguised anger.

In this remote spot they built their monastery. St. Gall was a skilful fisherman, and supplied the brethren with fresh fish from the lake. One St. Gall. silent night, when he was fishing, he heard (it is said), from the highest peak, the voice of the Spirit of the Mountains calling on the Spirit of the Waters in the depth of the lake. "I am here," was the reply. "Arise, then, to mine aid against these strangers who have cast me from my temple ; let us expel them from the land." "One of them is even now busied in my waters, but I cannot break his nets, for I am rebuked by the prevailing name, in which he is perpetually praying."ⁱ

The human followers of the Pagan deities were not so easily controlled. After two or three years the monks found a confederacy formed against them, at the head of which was a neighbouring chieftain, the savage Cunzo.^k Columban determined to retire. He had some thoughts of attempting the conversion of the Slavi and the Veneti ; but an angel, perhaps the approach of age, admonished him to seek a quiet retreat in Italy. He was honourably received by Agilulf, King of Lombardy. After some time spent in literary labours, in confutation of the Arianism which still lingered in that part of Italy, he founded the famous monastery of Bobbio.^l

ⁱ This story is too picturesque and striking to be omitted. It is characteristic, too, to find the divinities to which the Greeks would have attributed such sights and sounds, turned into malignant spirits. Two naked girls were bathing in a stream in which St. Gall was fishing. Of old

they would have passed for nymphs ; with him they were devils in that enticing shape. Sounds which they hear on the mountains, when catching hawks, are voices of devils.

^k Cunzo's daughter is said to have been betrothed to King Thierrî.

^l I follow the early life of St. Gall

St. Gall, from real or simulated illness, remained behind. He withdrew with his boat and fishing nets to Arbon; he was accompanied by some of the Irish monks, and in that neighbourhood founded the monastery, not less celebrated, which bore his name.

Thus these Irish monks were not merely reinvigorating the decaying monastic spirit, which perhaps Founders of monasteries. was languishing from the extreme severity of the rule of Cassianus chiefly followed in the monasteries of Gaul, but they were winning back districts which had been won from Roman civilisation by advancing barbarism. Monasteries replace ruined Roman cities. From them issued almost a race of saints, the founders of some of the most important establishments within or on the borders of the old Roman territory: Magnus and Theodorus, the first abbots of Kempten and of Fussen; Attalus of Bobbio; St. Romaric of Remiremont; St. Omer, St. Bertin, St. Amand, the apostles of Flanders; St. Wandrille, the founder of Fontenelle, in Normandy.^m Gradually the great establishments, founded on the rule of Columban, dropped the few peculiarities of discipline which distinguished them from the Roman Church; they retained those of their rule which differed from that of St. Benedict which was now beginning to prevail

in Pertz, from which was derived that of Walafrid Strabo. Jonas, the biographer of Columban, represents him as still persecuted by Brunehaut and Thiéri, who may indeed have excited the confederacy against him. Jonas also carries Columban back to the court of Theodebert, King of Austrasia, whom, when in the height of his power, he endeavours to persuade to take the clerical habit. "When was it heard," was the in-

dignant reply, "that a Merovingian on the throne stooped to become a clerk?" "If you become not one voluntarily," said the prophetic monk, "you will so by compulsion!" Theodebert afterwards, defeated by Brunehaut and the King of Burgundy, was forced to take orders, and then put to death. The history probably produced the prophecy.—Jonas, c. 27. Columban died about A.D. 615.

^m Michelet, *Hist. de France*, i. 275.

throughout western Christendom. Yet there was nothing of great importance to distinguish them from the Benedictine foundations; their rule, habits, studies (all, perhaps, but their dress) were those of western monasticism.ⁿ

Columban and his immediate followers had hardly extended the influence of Christianity beyond the borders of the old Roman empire. But, English missionaries. important as outposts on the verge of Christendom, or even in districts which had reverted to barbarism, gradually encircling themselves with an enlarging belt of cultivation and of Christianity, they were only thus gradually and indirectly aggressive. Another century had nearly elapsed when the Apostle of Germany came forth from a different part of the British Isles. Those Saxon conquerors whom Columban, when he touched the shores of Britain, left behind as irreclaimable heathens, had now become Christians from one end of the land to the other. In their turn they were to send out their saintly and more adventurous missionaries into their native German forests. Wilfrid of York had already made some progress in the conversion of the Frisians on the lower part of the Rhine; but almost all beyond the Rhine, when Boniface undertook the conversion of Germany, was the undisputed domain of the old Teutonic idolatry.

Boniface (his proper Saxon name was Winfrid) was born near Crediton, in Devonshire. From his infancy he is said to have displayed a disposition to singular piety; and in his youth the influence of his father could not repress his inclination to the monastic life. The father, alarmed by a dangerous S. Boniface.

ⁿ Mabillon, Hist. Ordin. Benedict., i. p. 195.

illness, yielded to the wishes of the boy who was received into a monastery at Exeter; afterwards he moved to Netley. Having completed his studies, he was ordained priest at thirty; and a confidential mission on which he was employed between a synod of the clergy and the Archbishop Berchtwald shows the estimation in which he was already held. But Boniface was eager for the more adventurous life of a missionary. His first enterprise was discouraging, and might have repressed less earnest zeal. With the permission of his superiors he embarked at London, landed on the coast of Friesland, and made his way to Utrecht. But Radbold, King of Frisia, at war with one of the Frankish kings, had commenced a fierce persecution of the Christians; everywhere he had destroyed the churches, and rebuilt the temples. Boniface found his eloquence wasted on the stubborn heart of the pagan, and returned to England.

But his spirit was impatient of repose. He determined to visit Rome, perhaps to obtain the sanction of the head of Western Christendom for new attempts to propagate the Gospel in Germany. He crossed the sea to Normandy, and with a multitude of other pilgrims journeyed through France, paying his adorations in all the more famous churches; escaped the dangers of the snowy Alps, the Lombards, who treated him with unexpected humanity, and the predatory soldiery, which were prowling about in all directions. He found himself, at length, on his knees in the church of St. Peter. He was received, on the presentation of recommendatory letters from his bishop, with condescending welcome.

The Pope, Gregory II. (our history will revert to the intermediate succession of popes; we are now in the

About
A.D. 700.

In Friesland.
About
A.D. 716.

About
A.D. 718.

In Rome,
A.D. 717-8.

eighth century), entered into all the views of Boniface, and sanctioned his passionate wish to ascertain how far the most savage tribes of Germany would receive the Gospel. Gregory bestowed upon him ample powers, but exacted an oath of allegiance to the Roman see. He recommended him to all the bishops and to all orders of Christians, above all to Charles Martel,^o who, as mayor of the palace, exercised royal authority in that part of France. He urged Charles to assist the missionary by all means in his power in the pious work of reclaiming the heathen from the state of brute-beasts.^p And Charles Martel faithfully fulfilled the wishes of the Pope. "Without the protection of the prince of the Franks," writes the grateful Boniface, "I could neither rule the people, nor defend the priests, the monks, and the handmaids of God, nor prevent pagan and idolatrous rites in Germany."^q The Pope attributes the spiritual subjugation of a hundred thousand barbarians by the holy Boniface to the aid of Charles.^r

Gregory II.
 A.D. 715-731.

A.D. 719.

Armed with these powers, and with a large stock of reliques, Boniface crossed the Alps and entered into Thuringia. This province was already in part Christian; but their Christianity required much correction (they were probably Arians), and the clergy were in no way disposed to that rigid celibacy now required of their order. Boniface did all in his power, but, notwithstanding the urgent addresses of the Pope himself to the Thuringians, by no means with complete success; they still resisted the monastic discipline.

In Thuringia.

^o See the letter in which Charles takes him under his mundebund or defence.—Apud Giles, i. 37.

^p Gregor. II., Epist. iv. v. vi.

^q Bonifac., Epist. xii., apud Giles to Daniel, Bishop of Winchester.

^r Sirmond Concil. ii. p. 527.

When he left Thuringia he heard of the death of Radbold, the pagan king of Friesland. He immediately embarked on the Rhine, in the hope of renewing, under better auspices, his attempts on that country. For three years he laboured there with great success, as the humble assistant of the Bishop Willibrod. Again the temples fell, and the churches rose. Willibrod felt the approach of age, and desired to secure as his coadjutor, as the future successor to his bishopric, a youthful teacher of so much zeal and wisdom. The humility of Boniface struggled against the offers, the arguments, the earnest entreaties of the Prelate. He pleaded that he was not yet fifty, the canonical age of a Bishop. At length he declared that he had been employed on a special service by the Pope to propagate the Gospel in Germany; he had already delayed too long in Friesland; he dared not decline, without the direct mandate of the Pope, his more imperative and arduous duties as a missionary.

Our curiosity, and higher feelings, are vividly excited by the thought of the earliest preachers of Christianity plunging into the unknown depths of the German forests, addressing the Gospel of peace to fierce and warlike tribes, encountering the strange and perhaps appalling superstitions of ages, penetrating into hallowed groves, and standing before altars reeking with human blood.* We expect the kindling adventure of romance to mingle with the quiet

Silence of
Christian
writers about
Paganism.

* Read (it is however on this subject quite vague) the counsel given to his countrymen, as to the mode of arguing with the heathen, by Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, as seen from his letters, in which he advises Boniface to keep on good terms even with the

wicked clergy of France. It is curious, that he was to contrast the fertile lands of the Christians, flowing with oil and wine, and abounding in wealth, with the cold and dreary deserts left to the pagans and their gods.—Epist. xiv. i. 48.

and steady course of Christian benevolence and self-sacrifice; at least perpetually to meet with incidents which may throw light on the old Teutonic character, the habits, manners, institutions of the various tribes. The biographers of the saints are in general barren of this kind of information; they rarely enter into details on the nature or the rites of the old religions; they speak of them in one sweeping tone of abhorrence; they condemn the gods under the vague term of idols, or adopt the Roman usage of naming them after the deities of Greece and Rome. On the miracles of their own saints they are diffuse and particular; but on the power, attributes, and worship of the heathen gods, except on a few occasions, they are almost silent. Boniface, it is said, on his first expedition among the Saxons and Hessians, baptised thousands, destroyed the heathen temples, and set up Christian churches. As a faithful servant he communicated his wonderful successes to Rome; he was summoned to the metropolis of Christianity, and, after a profession of faith in the Trinity, which would bear the searching inquisition of Rome,^t he was raised to the dignity of a bishop. On his return to Germany, Boniface found but few of his Hessian proselytes adhering to pure Christianity. They had made a wild mixture of the two creeds; they still worshipped their sacred groves and fountains; some yet offered sacrifices on their old altars. The wizards and soothsayers still maintained their influence; the trembling worshippers still acknowledged the might of their charms and the truth of their omens.

Boniface invited to Rome, 722. In Rome, 723. Ordained bishop, 723.

^t This was usual, or we might suppose that they dreaded another Ulphilas among these new German converts,

Boniface determined to strike a blow at the heart of the obstinate Paganism. There was an old The oak of Geismar. and venerable oak,^a of immense size, in the grove of Geismar, hallowed for ages to the Thunderer. Attended by all his clergy, Boniface went publicly forth to fell this tree. The pagans assembled in multitudes to behold this trial of strength between their ancient gods and the God of the stranger. They awaited the issue in profound silence. Some, no doubt, expected the axe to recoil on the sacrilegious heads of the Christians. But only a few blows had been struck, when a sudden wind was heard in the groaning branches of the tree, and down it came toppling with its own weight, and split into four huge pieces. The shuddering pagans at once bowed before the superior might of Christianity. Boniface built out of the wood a chapel to St. Peter. After this churches everywhere arose; and here and there a monastery was settled. But the want of labourers was great; and Boniface sent to his native land for a supply of missionaries. A number of active and pious men flocked from England to his spiritual standard; and many devout women obeyed the impulse, and either founded or filled convents, which began to rise in the districts beyond the Rhine. The similarity of language no doubt qualified the English missionaries for their labours among the Teutonic races: Italians had been of no use.

Boniface had won a new empire to Christianity; and was placed over it as spiritual sovereign by the respectful gratitude of the Pope. He received the pall of a Metropolitan, and was empowered as primate to erect bishoprics throughout Germany. Again he visited

^a Near Fritzlar. The oak is called *robur Jovis*.

Rome, and was invested by Gregory III., the new Pope, with full powers as representative of the Apostolic see.

The Metropolitan throne was fixed on the Rhine, at Mentz. This city had formerly been a bishop's see. In the wars of Carloman, the Frank, against the Saxons, the Bishop Gerold went out to battle with his sovereign and was slain. He was succeeded by his son, Gewelib, a man of strict morals, but addicted to hawks and hounds. Gewelib cherished the sacred hereditary duty of revenging his father's death.* He discovered the man by whose hand Gerold had fallen, lured him to an amicable interview in an island on the river, and stabbed him to the heart. Neither king nor nobles thought this just exaction of blood for blood the least disqualification for a Christian bishop. But the Christianity of Boniface was superior to the dominant barbarism. The blood-stained bishop was deposed by the act of a council, and on the vacancy the Metropolitan see erected at Mentz. From his Metropolitan see of Mentz, Boniface ruled Christian Germany with a parental hand. He exercised his power of establishing bishoprics by laying the foundations of some of those wealthy and powerful sees, which long possessed so commanding an influence in Germany. On his return from his third visit to Rome he passed through Bavaria; there he found but one solitary bishopric, at Passau. He founded those of Salzburg, of Freisingen, and of Ratisbon. In Thuringia the

Boniface Metropolitan of Mentz.
A.D. 745.

* From the Life of Boniface by a presbyter of Mentz.—Pertz, p. 354.
 “Episcopus autem a cæde regressus, rudi populo, rudis adhuc præsul, licet ætate maturus, tamen fide . . . præficitur; non computantibus nec rege, nec cæteris optimatibus, vindictam patris crimen esse, dicentibusque ‘Vicem reddidit patris mortì.’”

episcopal see was fixed at Erfurt; in Hesse, at Buraberg, which was afterwards removed to Paderborn: for Franconia he founded that of Wurtzburg. Besides these churches, those of Utrecht, Cologne, Eichstadt, Tongres, Worms, Spire, Augsburg, Constance, and Coire owned their allegiance to the supremacy with which the Metropolitan of Mentz had been invested by the successor of St. Peter.¹

Boniface ruled the minds of the clergy, the people, and the kings. He held councils, and condemned heretics: one, an impostor named Adalbert, who pretended to work miracles; the other, Clement, a Scot, who held some unintelligible doctrines on Christ's descent into hell, and on predestination.² The obsequious Frankish Sovereign of Austrasia, who claimed dominion over the whole of Christian Germany, punished the delinquents with imprisonment. Carloman, himself, who had risen from the post of Mayor of the Palace to that of Sovereign, was so wrought on by the pious eloquence of Boniface, that he abandoned his throne, bequeathed his son to the perilous guardianship of his brother Pepin, went to Rome, and retired into a monastery.

Boniface even opposed within his own diocese, the author of his greatness. The Pope Stephen, on his visit to Pepin, presumed to ordain a Bishop of Metz.

¹ The acts of Boniface in the reformation of the clergy of France will be related in a subsequent chapter.

² I cannot in these very obscure persons discern with some Protestant writers of Germany, even my friend M. Bunsen, sagacious prophets and resolute opponents of Papal domination which was artfully and delibe-

rately established by Boniface; a premature Luther and Calvin. Neither the jealousies nor the politic schemes belong to the time. The respect of Boniface for Rome was filial not servile. The tenets of Adalbert and Clement were doubtless misunderstood or misrepresented, but they are to me altogether indistinct and uncertain.

Boniface resisted this encroachment, and it was only at the earnest representation of Pepin, who urged the unreasonableness of such a quarrel between the heads of the Church, that the feud was allayed.^a

Resists the Pope.

But power and dignity were not the ruling passions of Boniface. He threw off all the pomp and authority of the Primate of Germany to become again the humble apostle. He surrendered his see to Lullus, one of the Englishmen whom he had invited

A.D. 753.

to Germany, and set forth, if not to seek, not to shrink from martyrdom among the savage pagans. He obtained that last glorious crown of his devoted life. In Friesland he had made numerous converts; the day was appointed on which he was to administer the rite of confirmation to a multitude of these neophytes. The morn had begun to dawn on the open country where the tents had been pitched, when they were suddenly attacked by a band of armed heathens. The converts of Boniface rose up in self-defence, but the saint discouraged their vain efforts, and exhorted them to submit in peace and joy to their heaven-appointed martyrdom. All met their doom; but their

Death of Boniface.
A.D. 754.

^a There is something remarkable in the simplicity with which Boniface remonstrates against certain unchristian practices at Rome. He asks Pope Zacharias if it can be true that heathen usages, such as feasts at the kalends of January, phylacteries worn by the women, enchantments and divinations, are allowed at Rome. He even ventures on one occasion to make more delicate inquiries as to simoniacal practices, especially that of selling metropolitan palls. "Quod talia a te

nobis referantur, quasi nos corruptores sumus canonum, et patrum rescindere traditiones quæramus, ac per hoc, quod absit, cum nostris clericis in simoniacam hæresim incidamus, accipientes et compellentes, ut hi quibus pallia tribuimus, nobis præmia largiantur."—Zachariæ Epist. ad Bonifac. Labbe, Conc. "Non oportet ut qui caput ecclesiæ estis, cæteris membris exempla contentionis præbeatis."—Vit. Bonifac. apud Pertz, vol. ii. p. 336.

assailants quarrelled about the spoil; made themselves drunk with the wine, and so fell upon each other, and revenged the Christian martyrs. The body of St. Boniface was conveyed to the monastery of Fulda.

This renowned monastery had owed its foundation to Monasteries. Boniface. These great conventual establishments were of no less importance in German history than the bishoprics. The history of Fulda illustrates the manner in which these advanced posts of Christianity and civilisation were settled in the midst of the deep Teutonic forests.

Sturmi was the son of noble Christian parents in Noricum; the enthusiasm of youthful piety led him to follow Boniface into Germany. He was ordained priest, and laboured successfully under the guidance of his master. He was seized with the dominant passion for the monastic state; and Boniface encouraged rather than repressed his ardour. With a few companions he entered into the forest solitude, and fixed at first at Hertzfeld. But this retirement was at once too near the frontier and exposed to danger from the pagan Saxons. Boniface urged them to strike deeper into the wilderness. Though their impulse was so different, their adventures resemble those of the backwoodsmen in America, exploring the unknown forests. They tracked in their boats along some of the rivers; but their fastidious piety, and, not perhaps altogether unworldly sagacity, could find no place which united all the requisites for a flourishing monastery; profound seclusion, salubrious and even beautiful situation, fertile soil, abundant water.^b With the tone, and,

^b "Tunc avidus locorum explorator | colles vallesque adspiciens, fontes et tor-
ubique sagaci obtutu montuosa atque | rentes atque fluvios perlustrans, perge-
plana perlustrans loca, montes quoque et | bat."—Vita S. Sturmii, Pertz, ii. 368.

in their belief, with the authority of a prophet, Boniface declared, on their report, that the chosen site would be revealed at length. Sturmi set out alone upon an ass, and with a small stock of food plunged fearlessly into the wilderness. He beguiled the way with psalms, at the same time he surveyed the country with a keen and curious observation. At night he lit a circular fire, to scare away the wild beasts, and lay down in the midst of it. His ass was one day startled by a number of wild Slavonians bathing in a stream, and the saint perceived the offensive smell which proceeded from them.^c They mocked him, probably by their gestures, but did him no harm. At length he arrived at a spot on the banks of the Fulda, where he was so delighted with the situation, the soil, the water, that having passed the whole day in exploring it, he determined that this must be the site predicted by Boniface. He returned to his companions. Boniface not merely approved of the choice, but also obtained a grant of the site, with a demesne extending four miles each way, from the pious Carloman, who, whatever his own title, gave it to God with as much facility as lands are now granted in Canada or Australia. Boniface himself went to visit the place, and watched the clearing of the forest and the preparations for building with unfailing interest. The monks of Fulda adopted the rule of St. Benedict; the multitude of candidates for admission was so great, that accommodation could not be found fast enough. Of all the gifts of Boniface, the most valuable was that

^c "Et ipse vir Dei eorum fetorem exhorruit." This seems to be meant literally, though the words which follow, "qui more Gentilium servum Dei subsannabant," might perhaps lead to another sense. If I am right in my translation, it is a curious illustration of the antipathy of races. —Apud Pertz, *ibid.*

of his body, which refused to repose anywhere but in the abbey of Fulda.

The abbots of Fulda were not perpetually employed in the peaceful and legitimate Christian Apostleship of Boniface for the conversion of Germany. At a later period they were summoned to attend Charlemagne on his Mohammedan mission for the conversion of the heathen Saxons by the sword. On his first campaign, the aged Sturmi was one of the flock of bishops, and abbots, and clergy who followed in the train of war.

England, meantime, had been still supplying the more peaceful warriors of the Cross, who endeavoured in vain by preaching the Gospel to subdue the fierce and exasperated Saxons. Willibald, the Apostle of Friesland, was a Northumbrian. Adalbert, Bishop of Utrecht, and Leofwin, who was martyred by the Saxons, with many others, came from our island. St. Ludger, though a Frisian by descent, had studied under Alcuin at York.^a In this singular manner the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England flowed back upon the continent; and Gregory the Great, by his conversion of England, gave the remote impulse to the conversion of large parts of Germany.

^a Vita S. Ludgeri, printed in Bede's works.

CHAPTER VI

The Papacy from the time of Gregory the Great to Gregory II.

| | A.D. | | A.D. |
|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| Gregory the Great, died | 604 | Adeodatus | 672 |
| Sabinianus | 604, 606 | Domnus | 677 |
| Boniface III. | 607 | Agatho | 679 |
| Boniface IV. | 608 | Leo II. | 682 |
| Deus-dedit | 615, 618 | Benedict | 684 |
| Boniface V. | 618, 625 | John V. | 685 |
| Honorius I. | 625, 638 | Conon | 686 |
| Severinus (2 months and 4 days) | 639 | Sergius | 687, 701 |
| John IV. | 640 | John VI. | 702 |
| Theodorus I. | 642 | John VII. | 705, 707 |
| Martin I. | 649, 655 | Sisinnius | 708 |
| Eugenius I. | 654 | Constantine | 708 |
| Vitalianus | 657 | Gregory II. | 716 |

ALL these conquests of Christianity were, in a certain sense, the conquests of the Roman See. Augustine had been a Roman missionary, and though the ancient British Church had raised up something of an intractable spirit in some of the English kingdoms, and passing to the Continent with Columban and his followers, had asserted some independence, and for a time had maintained usages which refused to conform to the Roman discipline; yet reverence for Rome penetrated with the Gospel to the remotest parts. Germany was converted to Latin Christianity. Rome was the source, the centre, the regulating authority recognised by the English apostles of the Teutons. The clergy were constantly visiting Rome as

The Teutons
converted to
Latin Chris-
tianity.

the religious capital of the world, to do homage to the head of Western Christendom, to visit the shrines of the apostles, the more devout to obtain reliques, the more intellectual, knowledge, letters, arts. The Pontificate of Gregory the Great had been the epoch at which had at least commenced both this great extension of Latin Christianity, and the independence of the Roman See.

Popes subordinate to the Eastern Emperors.

But the impulse had been much stronger towards the subjugation of these new dominions, than towards emancipation from the secular power of the Eastern emperors. While the Papal influence was thus spreading in the West, and bishops from the remotest parts of the empire, and of regions never penetrated by the Roman arms, looked to Rome as the parent of their faith,—if not to an infallible, at least to the highest authority in Christendom—the Pope, in his relation to the Eastern empire, has sunk again into a subject. He is the pontiff of a city within a conquered province, that province arbitrarily governed by an officer of the sovereign. He is consecrated only after the permission of the Emperor, is expected to obey the imperial mandate even on religious matters, exposed to penalties for contumacy, in one case arrested, exiled, and with difficulty saved from capital punishment.

In the century, or but few years more, after the death of Gregory the Great, down to the accession of Gregory II.,^a a rapid succession of twenty-four popes filled the Apostolic See. Few of them stand forth out of the obscurity of the times. The growth or rather the maintenance of the papal power is to be ascribed more to the circumstances of

^a Gregory the Great died 604. Gregory II. Pope 716.

the age than to the character or ability of the popes. Many of them were of Roman, most of Italian birth; few, even if they had been greater men, ruled long enough to achieve any great acts. Two of those, whose reign was most protracted, were distinguished, the one, Honorius I., only for his errors; the other, Martin, for his misfortunes.

Sabinianus, the successor of Gregory, has the character of a hard and avaricious man. He was a native of Volterra, and had been employed as the envoy and representative of Gregory at Constantinople.^b The admirers of Gregory describe Sabinianus as a bitter enemy to the fame of his holy predecessor. Gregory's unbounded liberality to the poor, Sabinianus reproached as a prodigal waste of the treasures of the Church, a vain ostentation, a low art to obtain popularity. A dreadful famine followed the accession of the new pontiff: he sold the corn, which Gregory was wont to distribute freely, at exorbitant prices;^c and laid the fault of the parsimony, to which he said that he was compelled, on the prodigality of Gregory. But the people, some of whom are said to have perished with hunger before the eyes of the un pitying pope, could not comprehend what might have been necessary, or even wise, economy.

Sabinianus seems to have struck on a chord of popular Roman feeling, which answered more readily to his touch. The populace listened greedily to the charge, first said to have been made by Sabinianus, of the wanton destruction made by the late pope of the public buildings and other monuments of the city. Gregory

^b The Apocrisarius was the title of the papal envoy at the Byzantine court.

^c 30 solidi a bushel.

was accused as having defaced with systematic Christian iconoclasm, and demolished the ancient temples, and as having thrown down and broken to pieces the statues which still adorned the city.^d The revenge suggested by the malice of Sabinianus was the public destruction of the works of Gregory. The pious mendacity of Peter the Deacon, as it had saved the mortal remains of his master from insult, now protected his works. He assured the populace that himself had seen the Holy Ghost, in the shape of a dove, whispering into the ear of Gregory. Whatever be the truth of these old traditions, they betray the existence of two unscrupulous hostile factions, one adoring, the other bitterly persecuting the fame of Gregory; and exhibit a singular, yet not unnatural, state of feeling in the Roman populace. The old Roman attachment to their majestic edifices, and even to the stately images of their ancient gods, is struggling successfully against their Christian reverence for their pontiff, but yielding to the most

^d Platina (de Vit. Pontif.) connects these two rumours. The iconoclasm of which Gregory is accused has given rise to a long controversy. Platina indignantly rejects the charge of wantonly destroying the public edifices, and assigns very probable reasons for their decay. "Absit hæc calumnia a tanto Pontifice Romano, præsertim cui certè post Deum patria quam vita charior fuit. Multa profecto ex collapsis ædificiis exedit vetustas. Multa præterea demoliuntur homines ædificandi gratiâ, ut *quotidiè cernimus*. Impacta illa foramina, quæ tum in concavo fornicum, tum in conjuncturis marmorum, quadratorumve lapidum videntur, non minus a Romanis quam

a barbaris avellendi æris causâ crediderim. In fornicibus enim, quo levior esset moles, ollas cum numismatibus collocabant. Lapidibus vero quadratis æneis clavis firmabant." The statues, he proceeds, fell of themselves, their marble or bronze pedestals being objects of plunder. The heads, the necks being the slenderest part, were knocked off in the fall. This is in answer to the accusation that Gregory caused the statues to be beheaded. I am not sure that Gregory's more religious contemporaries would have thought these charges calumnious: the period was not passed when the hatred of idolatry would predominate over the love of art.

credulous Christian superstition. Superstition triumphed the more easily over a hard and avaricious prelate; and, on the Pope's refusal to allow the sainted Gregory the quiet enjoyment of Christian peace in heaven, brought him down to punish his guilty successor, and avenge his own wrongs. Thrice Gregory appeared to rebuke Sabinianus—thrice he appeared in vain; the fourth time the spirit struck the pontiff a violent blow on the head, of which he died. So exasperated were the people against Sabinianus, that his funeral procession was conducted by a long circuit without the city, from the Lateran palace to St. Peter's, to escape the insults of the Romans. A vacancy of nearly a year ensued after the death of Sabinianus. The brief pontificate of Boniface III. is marked by the assumption of that awful title before which Christendom bowed for so many centuries, that of Universal Bishop. The pious humility of Gregory had shuddered at the usurpation of this title by the Patriarch of Constantinople. No language could express the devout abhorrence of this impious, heretical, diabolic, anti-Christian assertion of superiority. Boniface then represented the pope at the Imperial Court, and succeeded not merely in wresting this title from the rival prelate of Constantinople, but in obtaining an acknowledgment of the supremacy of St. Peter's successor.^f Neither the motive of the donor of this magnificent privilege, nor

A.D. 606.^e
Feb. 22, to
A.D. 607.
Feb. 19.

Boniface III.

* I would observe that in many of these dates, it is that of the consecration and burial which are recorded, not the accession and death of the Pope.

^f The early authorities for this fact are Anastasius Bibliothecarius in Vit. Bonifac. IV., and Paulus Diaconus, Hist. Longobard. Schroëck (Chr. Kirch. Gesch., xvii. 73, and xix. 488) is disposed to question the whole, to which perhaps too much importance has been given by modern controversialists. Baronius and Pagi have added, without any authority, that Phocas forbade the Patriarch of Constantinople to call himself Universal Bishop.

the donor himself, commend the gift. It was the tyrant Phocas, who hated the Patriarch of Constantinople for his humanity, in protecting, as far as he had power, the widow and the three helpless daughters of the murdered emperor Maurice from his vengeance; and this hatred of the Patriarch of Constantinople, rather than the higher respect for the Bishop of Rome, still less any mature deliberation on the justice of their respective claims, awarded the superiority to the old Rome. On the death of Phocas the Patriarch of Constantinople resumed, if he had ever abandoned, the contested title.

Even greater obscurity hangs over the decision of a synod held by Boniface at Rome, which is thought to have invested the papal see in more substantial and immediate power. Seventy-two bishops, thirty-three presbyters, and the whole assembled clergy, passed a canon that, under the penalty of anathema, no one should form a party for the succession to a bishopric; three days were to elapse before the election, and all bribery and simoniacal bargaining were strictly forbidden. No election was to be good unless made by the clergy and people, and ratified by the prince. A later and more doubtful authority subjoins, not till approved by the pope, under the solemn form, "We will and we ordain."⁵

Boniface IV., a Marsian, is celebrated for the conver-

Boniface IV. sion of the Pantheon into a Christian Church.
Nov. 607.

A.D. 608. With the sanction of the emperor, this famous
Sept. 15. temple, in which were assembled all the gods
died A.D. 615. of the Roman world, was purified and dedi-
May 25. cated to the new tutelar deities of mankind, the Virgin,
and all the martyrs.

⁵ This sentence rests only on the late and doubtful authority of Platina, in Vit. Pontif.

Deusdedit and Boniface V. occupied the papal throne for ten years of peace, unbroken by any hostile collision, either with the Exarch or the Lombard kings, and even undisturbed by any important controversy.

Deusdedit.
A.D. 615,
Oct. 19.
died A.D. 618.
May 25.
Boniface V.
A.D. 618-625
Oct. 25.

But the fatal connexion with the Eastern empire drove the succeeding popes into the intricacies and feuds of a new theological strife. While Mohammedanism was gathering in her might on its borders, and the stern assertors of the Divine Unity had already begun to wrest provinces from the Roman empire, the bishops in all the great sees of the East, the emperors themselves, were distracting their own minds, persecuting their subjects, and even spreading strife and bloodshed through their cities on the question of the single or the double Will in Christ. Honorius I. incurred a condemnation for heresy, his more orthodox successors suffered persecution, and one of them exile and death.

Honorius I.

It might have been supposed that Nestorianism, with its natural offspring, Eutychianism, had exhausted or worn out the contest concerning the union of the Godhead and the manhood in the Saviour. The Church had asserted the co-existence of the two natures—man with all his perfect properties—God with all his perfect attributes: it had refused to keep them in almost antagonistic separation with the Nestorian—to blend them into one with Eutyches. The Nestorian and the Monophysite had been alike driven away from the high places of the Church; though still formidable sects, they were but sects.

Controversy
about the
two wills in
Christ.

But the Godhead and the manhood, thus each distinct and complete in itself, yet so intimately conjoined

—where began the divergence? where closed the harmony? Did the will, not merely the consentient, but absolutely identical will, and one unconflicting operation of that will, having become an active energy, perform all the works of the Redeemer, submit to and undergo his passion? or did each nature preserve its separate independence of will, and only by the concordance of these two at least theoretically conflicting wills, produce the harmonious action of the two natures? At what point did the duality terminate—the unity begin?

Sergius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, first, it might seem almost inadvertently, stirred this perplexing question. He discovered a writing of his holy predecessor, Mennas, which distinctly asserted that the Christ was actuated by but one will. He communicated it to some of the Eastern bishops, to Theodorus of Pharan, who had a high name as a theologian, and to Cyrus, then Bishop of Phasis; both bowed before the authority, and accepted the doctrine of Mennas.

The Emperor Heraclius, though he did not aspire to the character of a distinguished theologian, like his predecessor Justinian, could not, even occupied as he was with his adventurous and successful campaigns in the East, keep himself aloof from religious controversy.^h In a suspension of arms during his war of invasion against the Lazians he encountered at Phasis the Bishop Cyrus whom he consulted on the important question of the single or double will, the single or double operation in Christ. Cyrus appealed to the Patriarch of Constantinople, who on

^h Walch has assigned the dates, adopted in the text, for the various incidents in the history of the Monothelitic controversy.—*Ketzer-Geschichte*, t. ix.

his own authority, and that of his predecessor, Mennas, decided in favour of the Monothelitic view. This doctrine had already offered itself under the captivating aspect of an intermediate term, which might conciliate the Monophysites with the Church. In Armenia, four years before, Heraclius had an interview with Paul, a follower of Severus, who, taken with the notion of one operation in Christ, was disposed to accede (with this explanation) to the Council of Chalcedon. At a later period, a more important personage, the Jacobite Patriarch, Anastasius, consented to remain, on these terms, with the Catholic Church. He was to be rewarded with the patriarchate of Antioch. Anastasius, it is said by his enemies, a man of consummate A.D. 628. craft, had overreached the unsuspecting emperor; the Jacobites mocked the simplicity of the Catholics, who, by this concession, instead of winning converts, had gone over to the doctrines of their adversaries. Monothelitism was but another form of Monophysitism.

Sergius of Constantinople addressed a letter to Honorius I. Honorius, in distinct words, declared himself a Monothelite. Yet Honorius, it is manifest, entirely misapprehended the question, and seemed not in the least to understand its subtle bearings on the controversies of the East. The unity which he asserted was not an identity, but a harmony. His main argument was, that the sinless human nature of Christ, being ignorant of that other law in the members, warring against the law of the mind, there could be no conflicting or adverse will in the God-Man.¹ But this plainer

¹ ὅθεν καὶ ἐν θέλημα ὁμολογοῦμεν τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπειδὴ προδήλως ὑπὸ τῆς θεότητος προσελήφθη ἡ ἡμετέρα φύσις, οὐκ ἁμαρτία ἐν ἐκείνῃ, δηλαδὴ ἡ φύσις πρὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας κτισθεῖσα, οὐκ ἦτις μετὰ τὴν παράβασιν ἐφθάρη. — Honor. Epist., Labbe, 930. The metaphysical

and more practical conception of the question betrayed the unsuspecting Pope into words, to which the Monothelites, proud of their important partisan, as well as the stern polemic resentment of his adversaries, A.D. 633, 634. bound him down with inexorable rigour. Notwithstanding the charitable attempt of one of his successors, John IV., to interpret his words in this wider meaning, Honorius I. was branded by the Council of Constantinople with the name of heretic.

The whole church might seem in danger of falling into the same condemnation. All the prelates of the great sees of Rome, of Constantinople, of Alexandria (now occupied by Cyrus, formerly Bishop of Phasis) and of Antioch, had asserted the one indivisible will in Christ. In Egypt this reconciling tenet had wrought wonders. On this basis had been framed certain chapters, which the followers of Dioscorus and of Severus, all the Jacobite sects, received with eager promptitude. For once the whole people of Alexandria became one flock; almost all Egypt, Libya, and the adjacent provinces, with one voice and one spirit, obeyed the orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria.^k Sophronius alone, who during the controversy became Bishop of Jerusalem, the same Sophronius who afterwards signed the humiliating capitulation of Jerusalem to the Mohammedans, boldly asserted and elaborately defended the doctrine of the two wills. So deeply impressed was Sophronius with the vital importance of this question, that long after, when the Saracens were masters of the Holy City, he took Stephen, Bishop of Dora, to the spot which was supposed to be the Golgotha, the place of

and practical character of the two letters contrast singularly. Honorius | recognised by the Scriptures.

reproves the introduction of terms not | ^k Sergii ad Honor. Epist. apud
Concil. Const. III., Labbe, p. 921.

the Lord's crucifixion. "To that God," he said, "who on this very place was crucified for thee, at his second coming to judge the quick and the dead, thou shalt render thine account, if thou delayest or art remiss in the defence of his imperilled faith; go thou forth in my place. As thou knowest, on account of this Saracen invasion, now fallen upon us for our sins, I cannot bodily strive for the truth, and before the world proclaim, to the end of the earth, to the apostolic throne at Rome, the tenets of orthodoxy." Sophronius protested, appealed, wrote large volumes; and the religious peace which seemed descending on the afflicted East, gave place again to strife, and feud, and mutual anathema.

But in the Byzantine empire, the creed to its nicest shades and variations was an affair of state: it was fixed, or at least defined, by imperial authority. Herac-
lius, while he looked with miscalculating or awestruck
apathy on the progress of the Mohammedan arms, could
not refrain from interference with this question of meta-
physic theology. In his name appeared the famous
Ecthesis,^m or Exposition of the Faith, drawn in all prob-
ability by the Patriarch Sergius, but which, as pro-
fessed by the emperor, his subjects were bound to
receive in humble and unquestioning obedience. The
Ecthesis declared the two wills in Christ to be a heresy,
which even the impious Nestorius had not dared to
promulgate. It was affixed, as the proclamation of the
imperial creed, on the gates of the great church at
Constantinople. The publication of the Ec-
thesis was followed, or immediately preceded,
by the death of Sergius of Constantinople and that of
Honorius of Rome.

A.D. 638.
Oct. 12.

^m Ecthesis Heraclii apud Labbe, p. 200.

The Popes who succeeded Honorius amply retrieved by their resolute opposition to Monothelitism what was considered the delinquency of that prelate. On the death of Honorius, Severinus was elected to the papal throne; but the confirmation of his election was long delayed at Constantinople, and only conceded on the promise of his envoys that he would accede to the creed of Heraclius. Severinus, however, repudiated the Monothelitic doctrine. In the interval between the election and confirmation of Severinus, the plunder of the treasures of the Roman Church by the Exarch of Ravenna showed the unscrupulous and irreverent character of the Byzantine government. Maurice, the Chartulary, harangued the soldiers. While they were defrauded of their pay, the Church was reveling in wealth. The Exarch's officer occupied the Lateran palace, and sealed up all the accumulated riches which Christian emperors, patricians, consuls had bestowed for their souls' health, for the use of the poor, and the redemption of captives. The rapacious Exarch Isaac hastened to Rome. The plunder was divided, the Emperor propitiated by his share, which was transmitted to Constantinople. The more refractory of the clergy, who presumed to remonstrate, were sent into banishment.

Severinus died after a pontificate of two months and four days. He was succeeded by John IV., a Dalmatian by birth.ⁿ John not only condemned the Monothelite doctrine, but piously endeavoured to vindicate the memory of his predecessor Honorius from the imputation of heresy. Honorius had denied only the two human wills, the conflicting sinful

A.D. 640.
Aug. 2.
John IV.
consecrated
Dec. 25.

ⁿ Anastasius in vitifi.

will of fallen man, and the impeccable will, in the person of Christ.* But the apology of John neither absolved the memory of Honorius before the Council of Constantinople, nor did the religious reverence of his successors, whose envoys were present at that Council, interpose in his behalf. The apology of John was addressed to the Emperor Constantine, whom it did not reach. For the death of Heraclius was followed by a rapid succession of revolutions at Constantinople. The later years of that Emperor had contrasted unfavourably with the glorious activity of his earlier administration. The conqueror of Persia seemed to look on the progress of Moham-
Death of
Heraclius.
Revolution
in Constantinople.
 medanism with the apathy of despair. He had deeply wounded the religious feelings of his subjects by an incestuous marriage with his niece Martina. It was the object of his dying wishes, of his last testament, that his son by Martina, Heracleonas, should share the empire with his elder brother, Constantine. The two sons of Heraclius were proclaimed co-equal Cæsars,
A.D. 641
 under the sovereignty of the Empress Martina.

But even Constantinople would not submit to the sway of an incestuous female. Martina was compelled to descend from the throne, and was succeeded by the feeble Constantine, whose decaying health broke down after a reign of but a hundred days. The enemies of Martina ascribed his death to poison administered by his stepmother and by Pyrrhus the Patriarch. Martina indeed again assumed the empire; but Constantine on

* "Decessor meus, docens de mysteriis incarnationis Christi, dicebat non fuisse in eo, sicut in nobis peccatoribus, mentis et carnis contrarias voluntates; quod quidam ad proprium sensum convertentes, divinitatis ejus et humanitatis unam eum voluntatem docuisse suspicati sunt."—Epist. Joan. Labbe or Mansi, sub ann. 641.

his death-bed had taken measures to secure the protection of the army for his children, the legitimate descendants of Heraclius. He had been assured that Heraclius had placed vast sums of money in the hands of the Patriarch to maintain the interests of Martina and her son. He, therefore, before he expired, sent a large donative to Valentinus, who commanded the army in the suburb of Chalcedon. Valentinus imperiously demanded the punishment of the guilty usurpers, of the assassins of Constantine. The citizens of Constantinople mingled with the ferocious soldiery. In the church of St. Sophia, Heracleonas was compelled to mount the pulpit, holding by the hand Constans, the elder of the sons of Constantine. With one voice the people, the soldiers, saluted Constans sole Emperor. A wild scene of pillage ensued; the barbarian soldiers, the Jews, and other lawless partisans desecrated the holy edifice by every kind of outrage. The Patriarch Pyrrhus, after depositing a protest on the high altar, fled. The Senate condemned Martina to the loss of her tongue, Heracleonas to the mutilation of his nose; these wretched victims were sent to die in exile. Constans was sole Emperor, and would brook no rival. His own brother Theodosius was compelled to incapacitate himself for sovereignty by holy orders. Yet even so the jealousy of Constans felt no security. Nothing was indelible to the imperial will at Constantinople; a successful usurper would have shaken off even that disqualification. Nearly twenty years after, Theodosius, the deacon, was assassinated by the command of his brother, whom the indignant people drove from his throne.

In the mean time religious war continued without abatement between Rome and Constantinople. The Monothelite Paul succeeded the Monothelite Pyrrhus.

The Ecthesis kept its place on the doors of the great church. But in the West, and in the whole of the African churches yet unsubdued by the Mohammedans, all Latin Christianity adhered to the doctrine of the two Wills. The monk Maximus, the indefatigable adversary of Monothelitism, travelled through the East and through Africa, denouncing the heresy of Sergius, and exciting to the rejection of the imperial Ecthesis. In Africa he held a long disputation, still extant, with the exile Pyrrhus. Theodorus I. had A.D. 645. succeeded after the short popedom of John IV. to the pontifical throne of Rome. Theodorus rejected Pope Theodorus, A.D. 642, Nov. 24. Monothelitism with the utmost zeal. During his pontificate, Pyrrhus of Constantinople came to Rome. Whether or not he acknowledged himself confuted by the unanswerable metaphysics of Maximus, he presented a memorial recanting all his errors on the single Will in Christ.^p The Pope Theodorus had received with courtesy from Paul, the successor of Pyrrhus, the communication of his advancement to the see of Constantinople; he had expressed some cautious doubts as to the regularity of the deposition of Pyrrhus, yet he had given his full approbation, he had expressed his joy on the elevation of Paul.^q But Paul was a Monothelite, Pyrrhus at his feet a penitent convert to orthodoxy. Pyrrhus was received with all the honours which belonged to the actual patriarch of A.D. 646. Constantinople.

But Pyrrhus, from what motive appears not, retired

^p "Præsente cuncto clero et populo, condemnavit omnia, quæ a se vel a decessoribus suis scripta vel acta sunt adversus immaculatam fidem."—Vit. Theodor.

^q "Et quidem gavisus super hujus sumus ordinatione."—Epist. Theodori ad Episcop. Constantin. apud Labbe, sub ann.

to Ravenna, recanted his recantation, and declared himself a conscientious Monothelite.^r The indignant Pontiff

A.D. 648.

was not content with the ordinary terrors of excommunication against this double renegade. In a full assembly of the clergy of Rome, and of the neighbouring bishops, he heaped the most vehement anathemas on the head of the new Judas, and calling for the consecrated wine on the altar, poured some drops into the ink, and so signed the excommunication with the blood of Christ. Is it to be supposed that the blood of the Redeemer was revered in a less appalling sense than in later ages, or that the passion of the Pope triumphed not only over Christian moderation, but over the strongest religious awe?^s Theodorus was not satisfied with the excommunication of Pyrrhus, he excommunicated Paul also. Paul revenged himself by suppressing the religious worship of the Papal envoys at the Court, maltreating, and even causing to be scourged some of their attendants.

Martin I., the successor of Theodorus, plunged more deeply, and with more fatal consequences, into this religious strife, or rather this revolt of the Western Province against the religious supremacy of the Emperor. Constans had withdrawn the obnoxious *Ecthesis*; Paul the Patriarch had himself ordered it to be removed from the gates of the great Church. The *Ecthesis* of Heraclius was replaced by the *Type* of Constans. The *Type* spoke altogether a different language; it aspired to silence by authority this interminable dispute. It presumed not to define the Creed, further

^r He may have hoped for his reinstatement in the patriarchate by the recommendation of the Exarch, and have found that his reconciliation with

Rome stood in his way.

^s Theophanes, p. 509, ed. Bonn.; Anastas., p. 163, *ibid.*; Vit Maximi; Epist. Synodal.

than all parties were agreed, or beyond the decisions of the former councils. It stated the question with perspicuity and fairness, and positively prohibited the use of the phrase either of the single or the double Will and Energy.[†] The penalties for the infringement of the Imperial decree were severe: against the ecclesiastic, deposition and deprivation; against the monk seclusion and banishment from his monastery; against the public officer, civil or military, degradation; against the private man of rank, confiscation of goods; against the common people, scourging and banishment.

Martin summoned a council in the Lateran, which was attended by 105 bishops, chiefly from Italy and the adjacent islands. After five sessions, in which the whole West repudiated Monothelitism with perfect unanimity, twenty canons were framed condemning that heresy with all its authors. But Pope Martin was not content with anathematising the erroneous doctrine of the Single Will, with humbling the rival prelate of Constantinople by excommunication in full council, with declaring the edict of the deceased Emperor Heraclius, the *Ecthesis*, absolutely impious; he denounced as of equal impiety the Type of the reigning Emperor. Its exhortation to peace he scorned as a persuasive to unholy acquiescence in heresy; silence on such doctrines was a wicked suppression of divine truth.

Nor was Martin wanting in activity to maintain his bold position. He published the decrees of the Lateran Council throughout the West; he addressed letters to the Frankish kings, entreating them to send representatives of their churches to join a solemn spiritual embassy

The Type in Labbe or Mansi, sub ann.

to Constantinople. He despatched other missives to Britain, to Spain, and to Africa. He even appointed a Legate in the East to supersede the Monothelite patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem. His letter to Paul of Thessalonica is in a tone of condemnatory haughtiness which had hardly yet been assumed by a successor of St. Peter.^u

But to the Emperor of the East the Pope was a refractory subject and no more. In Constantinople the person of the bishop had never been invested in that sanctity which shielded it from law, or that which was law in the East, the imperial will. Even the natural reverence for the holy office had been disturbed by the perpetual feuds, the mutual anathemas and excommunications, the depositions, the degradations, the expulsions, fatal to that unhappy see: and as old Rome was now a provincial city, her bishop would not command greater respect than the prelate of the Imperial Capital.

The Exarch Olympius received orders to seize the Pope if he persisted in his contumacy to the imperial edict, and to send him prisoner to Constantinople. But Olympius found the people of Rome prepared to take up arms in defence of their bishop. He attempted to obtain his end by more peaceful means. Later writers

^u See a curious specimen of the logic of anathema. The Bishop of Thessalonica, because he refuses to join Martin in anathematising the Monothelites, is confirming all the errors of Pagans, Jews, and heretics: —“*Ut per hoc non solum eos etiam quos anathematisamus, nempe ipsas hæreticorum personas, anathematisare recuses . . . sed ut etiam omnem omnium errorem Paganorum, Judæo-*

rum, hæreticorum in te confirmes. Si enim omnia omnium horum dogmata condemnamus, ut contraria et inimica veritati, tu vero omnia una nobiscum voce non anathematisas quæ anathematisamus, consequens est, te horum omnium errorem confirmasse, qui a nobis sive ab ecclesiâ catholicâ anathematisatur.”—Ad Paul. Epis. Thessal. apud Labbe, *apb* ann. 649.

have protected the Pope by miracle from an attempted assassination,* and bowed the awestruck Exarch before the feet of Martin. But Olympius was hastily summoned from Rome to repel an invasion of Sicily by the Saracens, and died of fatigue in that island.

The new Exarch Theodorus, named Calliopas, was more resolute in the execution of his orders. He marched to Rome, and summoned the Pope to surrender to the Imperial authority. Some delay took place from the apprehensions of the Exarch, that soldiers, and means of defence, stones, and other weapons, were concealed in the Church. But Martin shrunk from bloodshed, and refused the offers of his partisans, headed by many of the clergy, to resist the Exarch. Martin had ordered his bed to be strewed before the high altar in the Lateran. The Exarch and his troops entered the Church, the light of the candles flickered on the armour of the soldiery. Martin obeyed the summons of the Exarch to accompany him to the Lateran palace; there he was permitted to see some of the clergy. But suddenly he was hurried into a litter, the gates of Rome closed to prevent his partisans from following him, he was carried to the harbour of Portus, embarked and landed at Messina. Thence to Avidos, on the island of Naxos, where he was first permitted the use of a bath.

A.D. 653.
June 15.

June 19.

July 1.

The pious clergy crowded with their votive presents: the presents were seized, and the donors beaten back by the soldiery: "he who is a friend to Pope Martin is an enemy to the State." From Avidos a messenger was sent to Constantinople, to announce the arrival of the

* The swordsmen of Olympius was employed to stab the Pope while administering the communion to the Exarch; he was struck with blindness.—Anastas. in Vit.

heretic and rebel, the enemy and disturber of the whole Roman empire. On the 17th of September he arrived at Constantinople; he was left lying on a bed on the deck of the ship the whole day, the gaze of curious or hostile spectators. At sunset he was carried on a litter under a strong guard to Prandearia, the chief guard-house. There he was imprisoned, and forbidden to make known who he was. After

Pope Martin
in Constantinople.

Dec. 20.

ninety-three days of this imprisonment he was conveyed, on account of his weakness, upon a litter before the Senate. He was commanded to stand, but being unable, was supported by two guards. "Wretch," said the chief minister, "what wrong has the Emperor done to thee? has he deprived thee of anything, or used any violence against thee?" Martin was silent. Twenty witnesses were examined in order to connect him with some treason against the Emperor.⁷ Troilus demanded why he had not prevented, but rather consented to the rebellion of the Exarch Olympius. "How could I oppose the rebellion of Olympius, who had the whole army of Italy at his command? Did I appoint him Exarch?" The Pope was carried out to be exposed in a public place, where the Emperor could see him from a window. He was then half-stripped of his clothes, which were rent down, amid the anathemas of the people. The executioner fixed an iron collar round his neck, and led him through the city to the Prætorium, with a sword carried before him. He was then cast, first into a dungeon, where murderers were confined, then into another chamber, where he lay half-

⁷ He denied that he had sent money to the Saracens; he had only given some moderate sums to certain destitute servants of God. He repudiated the charge of having disdained the worship of the Virgin.—Ad Theodor. Epist.; Sirmond. iii. 320; Mansi sub ann.

naked and shivering with cold. The order for his execution was expected every moment. The next day the Patriarch Paul was lying on his death-bed, and besought the Emperor to show mercy to the persecuted Martin.^a Martin, who hoped for speedy martyrdom, heard this with regret. On the death of Paul, Pyrrhus, who had returned from Italy, resumed the throne of Constantinople. A long examination of Martin took place on the conduct of Pyrrhus at Rome. For eighty-five days Martin languished in prison: he was at length taken away, and embarked for the inhospitable shores of Cherson. At Cherson he died. Such was the end of a Pope of the seventh century, who dared to resist the will of the Emperor. The monk Maximus and some of his followers were treated even with greater cruelty. Maximus refused to deny the two Wills in Christ; his tongue and his right hand were cut off, and so mutilated he was sent into exile.^a

A.D. 654.

A.D. 655.

A.D. 657.

While Martin was yet living, Eugenius was elected to the see of Rome. His short rule^b was followed by the longer but uneventful Pontificate of Vitalianus. The popes, warned by the fate of Martin, if they did not receive, did not condemn the Type of Constans. They allowed the question of the two Wills in Christ to slumber. Eugenius received from the new Patriarch of Constantinople, Peter, the account of his elevation, with a

Pope Eugenius I.

A.D. 657.
July 30.

^a All this curious detail is furnished by two letters of Martin himself, and a long account by one of his followers.—Apud Labbe, pp. 63-75.

^a Collatio S. Maxim. cum Theodoro, apud Labbe; Theophan. Cedrenus, Vit. Maximi.—Libellus Synod.

^b If reckoned from the banishment of Martin, 2 years, 8 months, and 24 days (654-657). If from the death of Martin, only 6 months and 23 days. But the chronology is doubtful.—Binii. Not. in Anastas. Vit. apud Labbe, 432.

declaration of faith, silent on the disputed point. During the pontificate of Vitalianus Rome was visited by the Byzantine emperor. Constans had withdrawn from the Eastern Rome for ever. He dared not confront the hatred of the people on account of the murder of his brother the Deacon Theodosius, whom not even the tonsure could protect from his jealousy.^c He was pursued by the curses of mankind; and by the avenging spectre of his brother, which constantly offered to his lips a cup of blood: "Drink, brother, drink!" Yet in his restless wanderings he at times proclaimed a nobler object, the repression of the Saracens, who now began to command the Mediterranean and threaten Sicily, and of the Lombards, who seemed about to swallow up the Byzantine Exarchate in Italy.^d It is even said that in his hatred to Constantinople, he proposed to restore the empire to old Rome.^e But he visited Rome as a plunderer, not as the restorer of her power. He was received by the Pope Vitalianus almost with religious honours. The haughty conduct of Constans in Rome, and the timid servility of Vitalianus, contrast with the meetings of the Western Cæsars, fifty years later, with the successors of St. Peter. To the Emperor, the Pope is merely the high priest of the city. To the Pope, the Emperor is his undoubted lord and master. The Emperor has all the unquestioning arrogance of the sovereign, whose word is law, and who commands without scruple the plunder of the public

A.D. 663.
July 5.

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^c According to Cedrenus, at the tonsure of Theodosius, he had received the sacrament, it should seem, as a pledge for his brother's future security. *ἔκειρε πρότερον αὐτον διὰ Παύλου πατριάρχου διάκονον, ὃς καὶ μετέδωκε τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν ἀχράντων μυστηρίων*

ἐν ἁγίῳ ποτηρίῳ.—P. 343.

^d Paulus Diacon. lib. v.

^e *βουλόμενος καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν εἰς τὴν πρεσβυτέραν Ῥώμην μετενεγκεῖν.*—Zonar. l. xiv. 11; Glycas. Theophanes.

edifices, sacred as well as profane; the Pope the subject, who dares not interpose to protect the property of the city, or even of the Church. Constans remained twelve days in Rome; all the ornaments of brass, besides more precious metals, were stripped from the churches, the iron roof torn from the Pantheon, now a church, and the whole sent off to Constantinople. Constans retired amid the suppressed execrations of all orders, to die a miserable death at Syracuse.

July 17.

A.D. 668.

The Byzantine government did not discourage encroachments even on the spiritual supremacy of Rome in the West. Maurus, Bishop of Ravenna, emboldened by his city having become the capital of the Exarchate, asserted and maintained his independence of the Bishop of Rome. The Archbishop of Ravenna boasted of a privilege, issued by the Emperors Heraclius and Constantine, which exempted him from all superior episcopal authority, from the authority of the Patriarch of old Rome.^f Vitalianus hurled his excommunication against Maurus. Maurus threw back his excommunication against Vitalianus. It was not till the pontificate of Leo II. that the pride of the Archbishop of Ravenna was humbled or self humiliated, and Maurus, who had been an object of superstitious veneration to the people, deposed from his sanctity. Archbishop Theodorus, involved in a violent contest with his clergy, sacrificed the independent dignity of his see to his own power, and submitted to Rome; he was rewarded with the title of saint.^g

^f "Sancimus amplius securam atque liberam ab omni superiori Episcopali conditione manere, et solum orationi vacare pro nostro imperio, et non subjacere pro quolibet modo patriarchæ

antiquæ urbis Romæ, sed manere eam αὐτοκεφάλην."—Agnelli, Vit. Pontif. Ravenn. apud Muratori, p. 148.

^g Agnelli, p. 151.

Adeodatus and Domnus, or Donus, the successors of Vitalianus, have left hardly any record of their actions to Christian history. But the summons to a general council at Constantinople was issued by the successor of Constans, Constantine the Bearded, during the pontificate of Domnus; it arrived after the accession of Agatho, a Sicilian, to the Roman pontificate.

Constantine the Bearded was seized apparently with a sudden and unexplained desire to reunite the East and the West under one creed. Monothelitism may have been more unpopular in the East than outward circumstances had shown; the monks may have been of the opposite party; Constantine himself may have felt religious doubts as to the prevailing creed. It was not, however, till fourteen years after his accession that the sixth general council actually assembled at Constantinople to decide the question of Monothelitism. They met in a chamber of the imperial palace. The Emperor himself presided, by twelve of his chief ministers. Of the great patriarchs were present George of Constantinople, and Macarius of Antioch. The designated envoys of Pope Agatho were the Bishops Abundantius of Paternum, John of Portus, John of Rhegium, the sub-deacon Constantine, the presbyters Theodorus and Gregory, and the deacon John. Pope Agatho had entertained a hope of the presence of Theodorus, Archbishop of Canterbury, "the philosopher." He makes something like an ostentatious boast of the Lombard, Slavian, Frank, Gaulish, Gothic, and British bishops, subject to his authority.^h Two monks, George

^h "Sperabamus deinde de Britannia *plum* ad nostram humilitatem con-
Theodorum archiepiscopum et *philoso-* jungere; et maxime quia in medi

and Peter, represented the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and of Alexandria. The proceedings were conducted with solemn regularity. On one side were the legates of Pope Agatho, on the other Macarius of Antioch, a determined Monothelite. During the seventh sitting George, the Patriarch of Constantinople, rose and declared that, having carefully compared the passages from the fathers, cited by the Westerns and by Macarius, he had been convinced by the unanswerable arguments of the Romans: "to them I offer my adhesion, theirs is my confession and belief." The example of George was followed by the Bishops of Ephesus, Heraclea, Cyzicum, Chalcedon, the Phrygian Hierapolis, Byzia in Thrace, Mytilene, Methymna, Selymbria, Prusias, and Anastasiopolis. Macarius and his scholar, the monk Stephen, stood alone in open and contumacious resistance to the doctrine of the two wills. Macarius was degraded from his Patriarchal dignity; the monk Stephen condemned as another Eutyches or Apollinaris. The fifteenth session was enlivened by a strange episode. A monk, Polychronius, denounced as an obstinate Monothelite, challenged the council to put the doctrine to the test of a miracle. He would lay his creed on a dead body; if the dead rose not, he surrendered himself to the will of the Emperor. A body was brought into a neighbouring bath. The Emperor, the ministers, the whole council, and a wondering multitude, adjourned to this place. Polychronius presented a sealed paper, which was opened and read; it declared his creed, and that he had been commanded in a vision to hasten to Constantinople to prevent the Emperor from establishing heresy. The

gentium, tam Longobardorum, quam-
que Slavorum, necnon Francorum,
Gallorum, et Gothorum, atque Britan-
norum, plurimi confamulorum nos-
trorum esse noscuntur."—Apud Mansi
sub ann. 680.

paper was laid on the corpse; Polychronius sat whispering into its ear, and the patient assembly awaited the issue for some hours. But the obstinate dead would not come to life. An unanimous anathema (all seem to have been too serious for ridicule) condemned Polychronius as a heretic and a deceiver. The Synod returned to its chamber, and endeavoured to argue with the contumacious Polychronius, who, still inflexible, was degraded from all his functions.¹

The council proceeded with its anathemas. George of Constantinople endeavoured to save his predecessors from being denounced by name; the council rejected his motion, and one cry broke forth—Anathema against the heretic Theodorus of Pharan! Anathema against the heretic Sergius! (of Constantinople). Anathema against the heretic Cyrus! Anathema against the heretic Honorius! (of Rome). Anathema against the heretic Pyrrhus; against the heretic Paul; against Peter, Macarius, Polychronius, and a certain Apergius! At the close of the proceedings of this sixth general council, a creed was framed, distinctly asserting the two wills and the two operations in Christ; and at the close of all, amid gratulations to the Cæsar, were again recited the names of the anathematised heretics, commencing with Nestorius, ending with Sergius, Honorius of Rome, and all the more distinguished Monothelites.

The decree of the Council of Constantinople, the sixth œcumenic council, was at once a triumph and a humiliation to the see of Rome; a triumph as establishing the orthodoxy of the doctrines maintained in the West by all the Bishops of Rome excepting Honorius. The Patriarch of Constantinople had been constrained to

¹ Council. sub ann.

recant the creed of his predecessors; the whole line after Sergius had been involved in one anathema. The Emperor himself had adopted the creed of Rome. The one obstinate Patriarch, Macarius of Antioch, had been stripped of his pall, and driven, with every mark of personal insult and ignominy, from the assembly. Yet was it a humiliation, for it condemned a Bishop of Rome as an anathematised heretic. But, while the Pope made the most of his triumph, he seemed utterly to disregard the humiliation. The impeccability of the Bishop of Rome was not as yet an article of the Roman creed. The successor of Agatho (who had died during the sitting of the Council), Pope Leo II., announced to the churches of the West the universal acceptance of the Roman doctrine; to the bishops and to the King of Spain he recapitulated the names of the anathematised heretics, among the rest of Honorius, who, instead of quenching the flame of heresy, as became the apostolic authority, had fanned it by his negligence; who had permitted the immaculate rule of faith, handed down by his predecessors, to suffer defilement.^k The condemned Monothelites of the East were <sup>A.D. 682,
Sept., Oct.</sup> banished to Rome, as the place in which they were most likely to be converted from their errors; and where some of them, weary of imprisonment in the monasteries to which they were consigned, abjured their former creed. Macarius of Antioch alone resisted alike all theological arguments, and all the more worldly temptations of reinstatement in the dignity and honours of his see.

^k "Qui flammam heretici dogmatis, non, ut decuit apostolicam auctoritatem, incipientem extinxit, sed negligendo confovxit."—Ad Episcop. Hispan., Labbe, p. 1246. "Honorius Romanus | qui immaculatam apostolicæ traditionis regulam quam a prædecessoribus suis accepit maculari consensit."—Epist. ad Ervig. Reg. Hispan. D. 1252.

The names of the Popes Benedict II., of John V., a Syrian by birth, of Conon, and of Sergius, fill up the rest of the seventh century. During this period an attempt was made to remedy the inconvenience of awaiting so long the imperial confirmation of the papal election. Nearly a year elapsed before the consecration of Benedict II. An edict of Constantine, who still cultivated a close alliance with the Popes, enacted that, on the unanimous suffrage of the clergy, the people, and the soldiery (the soldiery are now assuming in the election of the Pontiff the privilege of the Prætorian Guard in the election of the Emperor), the Pope might at once proceed to his consecration. This regulation, however, demanded that rare occurrence on the election of a Bishop of Rome, unanimity. On the election of Conon, and afterwards of Sergius, strife arose, and contending competitors divided the suffrages. The Exarch of Ravenna resumed his right of interference and of final sanction before the consecration of the Pope. On the death of Conon three candidates were proposed by their conflicting partisans. The Archdeacon Paschalis, the Archpresbyter Theodorus, were supported by two rival factions; a third proposed Sergius, of a Syrian family, which had settled at Palermo in Sicily. Each of the other candidates occupied a strong position in the city, when the third party set up Sergius, and carried him in triumph to the Lateran Palace. Theodorus was compelled to surrender his claims, but Paschalis had sent large offers of money to Ravenna, and depended on the support of the Exarch. The Exarch came to Rome, declared in favour of Sergius, but exacted from him a donative at least equal to that offered by the rejected

Popes.

Benedict II.,
A.D. 683-685.John V.,
A.D. 685, 686.Conon,
A.D. 686, 687.Sergius I.,
A.D. 687.A.D. 684.
Jan. 26.Theodorus,
A.D. 687.
Paschalis
anti-Pope,
A.D. 687-692.

Paschalis.^m The churches were laid under contribution to satisfy the rapacious Exarch.

Sergius rejected certain canons of the Quinisextan Council,ⁿ which assembled at the summons of the Emperor Justinian II. This Council is Quinisextan Council. the great authority for the discipline of the Greek Church. Rigid in its enactments against marriage after entering into holy orders, and severe against those who had married two wives, or wives under any taint as of widowhood, actresses, or any unlawful occupation, it nevertheless deliberately repudiated the Roman canon^o which forced such priests to give up all commerce with their wives: it asserted the permission of Scripture in favour of a married clergy, married, that is, to virgins and reputable wives, previous to taking orders. Sergius disdainfully refused his adhesion to the authority of the Council, and annulled its decrees. Justinian, like his predecessor Constans, endeavoured to treat the Pope as a refractory subject. He sent orders for his apprehension and transportation to Constantinople. But Sergius was strong, not only in the affections of the people, but of the army also. The protospatharius, the officer of the Emperor, was driven with insult from the city; the Pope was obliged to interfere in order to appease the tumult among the indignant soldiery. Ere the Emperor could revenge his insulted dignity he was himself deposed. Before his restoration Sergius had Sergius died, A.D. 701. Justinian restored, 705. been dead several years. Even if the successors of Sergius pursued his contumacious policy, nearer objects of detestation first demanded the revenge of Justinian, who had no time to waste on a distant

^m Anastas. in Vit. Sergii.

ⁿ Called also the Council in Trullo, from the chamber in the imperial

palace in which it was held.

^o Can. iii. xiii. apud Labr., pp. 1141-1148.

priest who had only resisted his religious supremacy. But on a later occasion Justinian asserted to the utmost the imperial authority.

The eighth century opened with the pontificate of John VI. John VI., in which the papal influence displayed itself in the becoming character of protector of the peace of the city. The Pope saved the life of the Exarch Theophylact, against whom the soldiery had risen in insurrection: they were calmed by the persuasive eloquence of the Pontiff. Certain infamous persons had made charges against some of the more eminent citizens of Rome, to tempt the Exarch to plunder them of their property. By the Pope's influence they were themselves punished by a heavy fine. He compelled or persuaded the Lombard Duke of Benevento, who had made a predatory incursion into Campania, to withdraw into his own territories. The Pope redeemed all the captives which the Lombard had taken.

During the pontificate of John VII., a Greek, the Emperor Justinian II. resumed the throne of Constantinople. The timid Pope trembled at his commands to receive the decrees of the Quinisextan Council; he endeavoured to temporise, but escaped by death from the conflict. Sisinnius, a Syrian, was chosen his successor, but died twenty days after his election.

He was succeeded by Constantine, another Syrian. At the commencement of this pontificate, Felix, the newly-elected Archbishop of Ravenna, came to Rome for his consecration. But Felix refused to sign the customary writing testifying his allegiance to the Roman see, and to renounce the independence of Ravenna. The imperial ministers at Rome

took part against him, and, in fear of their power, he tendered an ambiguous act of submission, in which he declared his repugnance to his own deed. It was said that this act, laid up in the Roman archives, was in a few days found black and shrivelled as by fire. But Felix had a more dangerous enemy than Pope Constantine. The Emperor Justinian had now glutted his vengeance on his enemies in the East; he sought to punish those who had either assisted or at least rejoiced in his fall in the more distant provinces. The inhabitants of Ravenna had incurred his wrath. A fleet, with Theodorus the patrician at its head, appeared in their haven; the city was occupied, the chief citizens seized, according to one account by treachery, A.D. 708. transported to Constantinople, and there by the sentence of the Emperor put to death. The Archbishop was deprived of his eyes in the most cruel manner A.D. 709. by the express orders of the Emperor. He was then banished to the Crimea.^p The terrible Justinian still aimed at reducing the West to obedience to the Quinisextan Council. He summoned Constantine before his presence in Constantinople. The Pope had the courage and wisdom to obey. His obedience conciliated the Emperor. Everywhere he was A.D. 710, 711. well entertained, and he was permitted to delay till the tempestuous winter season was passed. In the spring he arrived in Constantinople, where he was received by Tiberius, son of the Emperor. Justinian was himself at Nicæa; he advanced to Nicomedia to meet the Bishop of Rome. It is said by the Western writers that the Emperor knelt and kissed the feet of the Pope—an act neither consonant to Greek usage

^p Anastas. in Vit.; Agnelli, Vitæ Pontif. Ravennat.

nor to the character of Justinian. But the Emperor's pride was gratified by the submission of Constantine. How far the Pope consented to the canons of the Quinisextan Council, by what arts he eluded those which were adverse to the Roman discipline, history is silent. But Constantine returned to Italy in high favour with the Emperor, and bearing the imperial confirmation of all the privileges of the Church of Rome. The wisdom of Constantine's conduct became still more manifest. During his absence John Rizocopus, the new Exarch, entered Rome, seized and put to death many of the principal clergy. The Exarch proceeded to Ravenna, where he was slain in an insurrection of the citizens.² This insurrection grew to an open revolt. Ravenna and the Pentapolis threw off the imperial yoke, under the command of George, son of Giovannicius, the Emperor's secretary. On the death of Justinian and the change of the dynasty they renewed their allegiance; the blind Archbishop Felix returned from his banishment, and resumed the functions of his see.

Constantine was the last Pope who was the humble
 A.D. 716. subject of the Eastern Emperor. With
 Gregory II. we enter on a new epoch in the
 history of Latin Christendom.

² Anastasius—Agnoelli, ut supra.

CHAPTER VII.

Iconoclasm.

THE eighth century gave birth to a religious contest, in its origin, in its nature, and in its important political consequences entirely different from ^{Iconoclasm.} all those which had hitherto distracted Christendom. Iconoclasm was an attempt of the Eastern Emperor to change by his own arbitrary command the religion of his subjects. No religious revolution has ever been successful which has commenced with the government. Such revolutions have ever begun in the middle or lower orders of society, struck on some responsive chord of sympathy in the general feeling, supplied some religious want, stirred some religious energy, and shaken the inert strength of the established faith by some stronger counter emotion. Whatever the motives of the Emperor Leo the Isaurian (and on this subject, as in all the religious controversies where the writings of the unsuccessful party were carefully suppressed or perished through neglect, authentic history is almost silent), whether he was actuated by a rude aversion to what perhaps can hardly yet be called the fine arts with which Christianity was associating itself, or by a spiritual disdain and impatience of the degrading superstition into which the religion of the Gospel had so long been degenerating, the attempt was as politically unwise and unseasonable as the means employed were despotic and altogether unequal to the end. The time was passed, it

it had ever been, when an imperial edict could change, or even much affect, the actual prevailing religion of the empire. For this was no speculative article of belief, no question of high metaphysical theology, but a total change in the universal popular worship, in the spirit and in the essence, if not of the daily ritual, of countless observances and habitual practices of devotion. It swept away from almost all the churches of the Empire objects hallowed by devotion, and supposed to be endowed with miraculous agency; objects of hope and fear, of gratitude and immemorial veneration. It not merely invaded the public church, and left its naked walls without any of the old remembrancers of faith and piety; it reached the private sanctuary of prayer. No one could escape the proscription; learned or unlearned, priest or peasant, monk or soldier, clergyman or layman, man, woman, and even child, were involved in the strife. Something to which their religious attachments clung, to which their religious passions were wedded, might at any time be forcibly rent away, insulted, trampled under foot; that which had been their pride and delight could only now be furtively visited, and under the fear of detection.

Nor was it possible for this controversy to vent itself in polemic writings; to exhaust the mutual hatred which it engendered in fierce invectives, which, however they might provoke, were not necessarily followed by acts of conflict and bloodshed. Here actual, personal, furious collision of man and man, of faction and faction, of armed troops against armed troops, was inevitable. The contending parties did not assail each other with mutual anathemas, which they might despise, or excommunication and counter-excommunication, the validity of which might be questioned.

Nature of the controversy.

by either party. On one side it was a sacred obligation to destroy, to mutilate, to dash to pieces, to deface the objects on which the other had so long gazed with intense devotion; and which he might think it an equally sacred obligation to defend at the sacrifice of life. It was not a controversy, it was a feud; not a polemic strife, but actual war declared by one part of Christendom against the other. It was well perhaps for Christendom that the parties were not more equally balanced; that, right or wrong, one party in that division of the Christian world, where total change would have been almost extermination, obtained a slow but complete triumph.

In all the controversies, moreover, in which the Emperors had been involved, whether they had plunged into them of their own accord, or had been compelled to take a reluctant part;—whether they embraced the orthodox or the erroneous opinions,—they had found a large faction, both of the clergy and the people, already enlisted in the cause. In this case they had to create their own faction; and though so many of the clergy, from conviction, fear, or interest, became Iconoclasts, as to form a council respectable for its numbers; though, among some part of the people, an Iconoclastic fanaticism broke out, yet it was no spontaneous movement on their part. The impulse, to all appearance, emanated directly from the emperor. It was not called forth by any general expression of aversion to the existing superstition by any body of the clergy, or by any single bold reformer: it was announced, it was enacted in that character of Supreme Head of the Empire, which was still supposed to be vested in the Cæsar, and had descended to him as part of his inheritance from his pagan predecessors. This sovereignty com-

prehended religious as well as temporal autocracy ; and of this the clergy, though they had often resisted it, and virtually, perhaps, held it to be abrogated, had never formally, publicly, or deliberately, declined the jurisdiction. It is a proof of the strong will and commanding abilities of the great Iconoclastic Emperors, that they could effect, and so long maintain, such a revolution, by their sole authority, throughout at least their eastern dominions.

And there was this irremediable weakness in the cause of Iconoclasm. It was a mere negative doctrine, a proscription of those sentiments which had full possession of the popular mind, without any strong counter-vailing religious excitement. There was none of that appeal to principles like those of the Reformation, to the Bible, to justification by faith, to the individual sense of responsibility. The senses were robbed of their habitual and cherished objects of devotion, but there was no awakening of an inner life of intense and passionate piety. The cold naked walls from whence the Scriptural histories had been effaced, the despoiled shrines, the mutilated images, could not compel the mind to a more pure and immaterial conception of God and the Saviour. It was a premature Rationalism, enforced upon an unreasoning age—an attempt to spiritualise by law and edict a generation which had been unspiritualised by centuries of materialistic devotion. Hatred of images, in the process of the strife, might become, as it did, a fanaticism—it could never become a religion. Iconoclasm might proscribe idolatry, but it had no power of kindling a purer faith.

The consequences of this new religious dissension were of the utmost political importance, both in the East and in the West. In the East, instead of consolidating

the strength of Christendom in one great confederacy against invading Mohammedanism, it dis-tracted the thoughts of men from their more pressing dangers, weakened the military energy which, under the Isaurian race of emperors, seemed likely to revive; depopularised, with at least one half of their subjects, sovereigns of such great ability as Leo and Constantine Copronymus (whose high qualities for empire pierce through the clouds which are spread over their names by hostile annalists); and finally by adding a new element of animosity to the domestic intrigues within the palace, interrupted the regular succession, and darkened the annals of the empire with new crimes.

Its conse-
quences.

But its more important results were the total disruption of the bond between the East and the West—the severance of the Italian province from the Byzantine Empire; the great accession of Power to the Papacy, which took the lead in this revolution; the introduction of the Frankish kings into the politics of Italy; and eventually the establishment of the Western Empire under Charlemagne.

Yet this question, thus prematurely agitated by the Iconoclastic emperors, and at this period of Christianity so fatally mistimed, is one of the most grave, and it should seem inevitable controversies, arising out of our religion. It must be judged by a more calm and profound philosophy than could be possible in times of actual strife between two impassioned and adverse factions. It is a conflict of two great principles, which it is difficult to reconcile. On the one hand, there can be no doubt that with ignorant and superstitious minds, the use, the reverence, the worship of images, whether in pictures or statues, invariably degenerates into

idolatry. The Church may draw fine and ærial distinctions between images as objects of reverence and as objects of adoration; as incentives to the worship of more remote and immaterial beings, or as actual indwelling deities; it may nicely define the feeling which images ought to awaken;—but the intense and indiscriminating piety of the vulgar either understands not, or utterly disregards these subtleties; it may refuse to sanction, it cannot be said not to encourage, that devotion which cannot and will not weigh and measure either its emotions or its language. Image-worship in the mass of the people, of the whole monkhood at this time, was undeniably the worship of the actual, material, present image, rather than that of the remote, formless, or spiritual power, of which it was the emblem or representative. It has continued, and still continues, to be in many parts of Christendom this gross and unspiritual adoration; it is a part of the general system of divine worship. The whole tendency of popular belief was to localise, to embody in the material thing the supernatural or divine power. The healing or miraculous influence dwelt in, and emanated from, the picture of the saint—the special, individual picture—it was contained within the relique, and flowed directly from it. These outward things were not mere occasional vehicles of the divine bounty, indifferent in themselves; they possessed an inherent, inalienable sanctity. Where the image was, there was the saint. He heard the prayer, he was carried in procession to allay the pestilence, to arrest the conflagration, to repel the enemy. He sometimes resumed the functions of life, smiled, or stretched his hand from the wall. An image of the same saint, or of the Virgin, rivalled another image in its wonder-working power, or its mild benignity.

On the other hand, is pure and spiritual Christianity—the highest Christianity to which the human mind can attain—implacably and irreconcilably hostile to the Fine Arts? Is that influence of the majestic and the beautiful awakened through the senses by form, colour, and expression, to be altogether abandoned? Can the exaltation, the purification of the human soul by Art in no way be allied with true Christian devotion? Is that aid to the realisation of the historic truths of our religion, by representations, vivid, speaking, almost living, to be utterly proscribed? Is that idealism which grows out of and nourishes reverential feelings, to rest solely on the contemplation of pure spirit, without any intermediate human, yet superhumanised, form? Because the ignorant or fraudulent monk has ascribed miraculous power to his Madonna or the image of his patron saint, and the populace have knelt before it in awe which it is impossible to distinguish from adoration, is Christianity to cast off as alien to its highest development, the divine creations of Raffaello, or of Correggio? Are we inexorably to demand the same sublime spiritualism from the more or less imaginative races or classes of mankind?

This great question lies indeed at the bottom of the antagonism between those two descriptions of believers; to a certain extent, between the religion of southern and that of northern Europe, between that of the races of Roman and some of those of Teutonic descent; between that of the inhabitants of towns or villages, and rude mountaineers; finally, between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

But since, in the progress of civilisation, the fine arts will no doubt obtain, if not greater influence, more general admiration, religion must either break off en-

tirely all association with these dangerous friends, and the fine arts abandon the most fertile and noblest field for their development; or their mutual relations must be amicably adjusted. A finer sense of their inherent harmony must arise; the blended feelings which they excite must poise themselves far above the vulgar superstition of idolatry, while they retain the force and intensity of devotional reverence. The causes which may be expected to work this sacred reconciliation may be the growing intelligence of mankind, greater familiarity with the written Scriptures; and, paradoxical as it may sound, but as may hereafter appear, greater perfection in the arts themselves, or a finer apprehension of that perfection in ancient as in modern art.

Doubtless, the pure, unmingled, spiritual notion of the Deity was the elementary principle of Christianity. It had repudiated all the anthropomorphic images, which to the early Jews had impersonated and embodied, if it had not to grosser minds materialised, the Godhead, and reduced God to something like an earthly sovereign, only enthroned in heaven in more dazzling pomp and magnificence. Even the localisation of the Deity in the temple or the tabernacle, a step towards materialisation, had been abrogated by the Saviour himself. Neither Samaria nor Jerusalem was to be any longer a peculiar dwelling place of the Universal Father.

Throughout the early controversy on image-worship, there was a steadfast determination to keep the Parent and Primal Deity aloof from external form. No similitude of the unseen, incomprehensible Father, was permitted for many centuries;^a even in a symbolic form,

^a "Cur tandem patrem domini Jesu | gimus, quoniam quod sit non novimus,
Christi non oculis subijcimus, et pin- | Deique natura spectanda proponi non

as in the vision of Ezekiel, which Raffaele and some of the later painters have ventured to represent. It should seem, that even if the artists had been equal to the execution, the subject would have been thought presumptuous or profane.^b

But if Christianity was thus in its language and in its primal conception so far superior in its spirituality to the religion of the Old Testament, it had itself its peculiar anthropomorphism; it had its visible, material, corporeal revelation of the Deity. God himself, according to its universal theory, had condescended to the human form.^c Christ's whole agency, his birth, his infancy, his life, and his death, had been cognisable to the senses of his human brethren in the flesh. If, from the language of the Scriptures, descriptive of all those wonderful acts of power, of mercy, and of suffering, the imagination might realise to itself his actual form, motions, demeanour, the patient majesty in death, the dignity after the resurrection, the incipient glory in the ascension, and worship that mental image as the actual incarnate Godhead, why might not that which was thus first embodied in inspired language, and thence endowed with life by the creative faculty of the mind, be fixed in colour and in stone, and so be preserved from evanescence, be so arrayed in permanent ideal being? Form and colour were but another language addressed to the eye, not to the ear. While the Saviour was on earth, the divinity within his human form demanded the in-

potest ac pingi. Quod si eum intuiti essemus ac novissemus prout filium ejus, illum quoque spectandum proponere potuissemus, ac pingere, ut et illum imaginem idolum appellares."—Greg. II. Epist. i., ad Leon. Imper. p. 14.

^b See the chapter in the History of

Christianity on the Fine Arts, vol. iii. p. 377 *et seqq.*, and Didron, *Iconographie Chrétienne*.

^c οὐ τὴν ἀοράτου εἰκονίζω θεότητα, ἀλλ' εἰκονίζω θεοῦ τὴν δραθεῖσαν σάρκα.—Jæann. Damascen., *Orat. d. Imag.* 1.

tensest devotion, the highest worship which man could offer to God. The Saviour thus revived by the phantasy, even as he was in the flesh, might justly demand the same homage. When that image became again actual form, did the material accessories—the vehicle of stone or colour—so far prevail over the ideal conception, as to harden into an idol that which, as a mental conception, might lawfully receive man's devotions? It seemed to awaken only the same emotions, which were not merely pardonable, but in the highest degree pious, in the former case: why, then, forbidden or idolatrous in the latter?^a

The same argument which applied to the Saviour, applied with still greater force to those merely human beings, the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles, the saints, the martyrs, even to the Virgin herself. Why should not their histories be related by forms and colours, as well as by words? It was but presenting the same truths to the mind through another sense. If they were unduly worshipped, the error was in the hagiolatry or adoration of saints, not in the adoration of the image. Pictures were but the books of the unlearned; preachers never silent of the glory of the saints, and instructing with soundless voice the beholders, and so sanctifying the vision. "I am too poor to possess books, I have no leisure for reading: I enter the church, choked with the cares of the world,

^a This argument is urged by Gregory II. in his epistle to Germanus at great length: "Enarrent illa et per voces, et per literas, et per picturas." So Germanus: ἄπερ διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς ἀληθῆ πεπιστεύκαμεν, ταῦτα καὶ διὰ γραφικῆς μιμήσεως πρὸς βεβαιωτέραν ἡμῶν πληροφορίαν συνιστάνομεν.—Epist. ad Joann. Episc. Synad. They

argued that this was an argument for Christ's real humanity against the Docetic sects. Their favourite authority was Basil: ἃ γὰρ ὁ λόγος τῆς ἱστορίας διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς παρίστησι, ταῦτα γραφῇ σιωπῶσα διὰ μιμήσεως δείκνυσσι. So also Joann. Damasc.: ὅπερ τῇ ἀκοῇ ὁ λόγος, τοῦτο τῇ ὁράσει ἢ εἰκῶν.

the glowing colours attract my sight and delight my eyes, like a flowery meadow; and the glory of God steals imperceptibly into my soul. I gaze on the fortitude of the martyr and the crown with which he is rewarded, and the fire of holy emulation kindles within me, and I fall down and worship God through the martyr, and I receive salvation.”^e Thus argues the most eloquent defender of images, betraying in his ingenious argument the rudeness of the arts, and the uncultivated taste not of the vulgar alone. It is the brilliancy of the colours, not the truth or majesty of the design, which enthralls the sight. And, so in general, the ruder the art the more intense the superstition. The perfection of the fine arts leads rather to diminish than to promote such superstition. Not merely does the cultivation of mind required for their higher execution, as well as the admiration of them, imply an advanced state; but the idealism which is their crowning excellence, in some degree unrealises them, and creates a different and more exalted feeling. There is more direct idolatry paid to the rough and ill-shapen image, or the flat, unrelieved, and staring picture,—the former actually clothed in gaudy and tinsel ornaments, the latter with the crown of gold leaf on the head, and real or artificial flowers in the hand,—than to the noblest ideal statue, or the Holy Family with all the magic of

• ὅτι βίβλοι τοῖς ἀγραμμάτοις εἰσὶν αἱ εἰκόνες, καὶ τῆς τῶν ἁγίων τιμῆς ἀσίγητοι κήρυκες, ἐν ᾗ χη φωνῇ τοὺς ὁρώντας διδάσκουσai, καὶ τὴν ὕρασιν ἀγάξουσai. οὐκ εὐπορῶ βίβλων, οὐ σχόλην ἄγω πρὸς τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν· εἴσειμι εἰς τὸ κινῶν τῶν ψυχῶν ἰατρεῖον, ἣν ἐκκλησίαν, ὥσπερ ἀκάνθαις τοῖς λογισμοῖς συνπνιγόμενος, ἔλκει με πρὸς θέαν

τῆς γραφῆς τὸ ἄνθος, καὶ ὡς λειμῶν τέρπει τὴν ὕρασιν, καὶ λεληθότως ἐναφίησι τῇ ψυχῇ δόξα θεοῦ. τεθέαμαι τὴν καρτερίαν τοῦ μάρτυρος, τῶν στεφάνων τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν, καὶ ὡς πυρὶ πρὸς ξύλον ἐξάπτομαι τῇ προθυμίᾳ, καὶ πίπτων προσκυνῶ θεὸν διὰ τοῦ μάρτυρος, καὶ λαμβάνω τὴν σωτηρίαν. — Joann. Damascen. *in Imag. Orat. ii. p. 747.*

light and shade. They are not the fine paintings which work miracles, but the coarse and smoke-darkened boards, on which the dim outline of form is hardly to be traced.^f Thus it may be said, that it was the superstition which required the images, rather than the images which formed the superstition. The Christian mind would have found some other fetiche, to which it would have attributed miraculous powers. Reliques would have been more fervently worshipped and endowed with more transcendent powers, without the adventitious good, the familiarising the mind with the historic truths of Scripture or even the legends of Christian martyrs, which at least allayed the evil of the actual idolatry. Iconoclasm left the worship of reliques, and other dubious memorials of the saints, in all their vigour; while it struck at that which, after all, was a higher kind of idolatry. It aspired not to elevate the general mind above superstition, but proscribed only one, and that not the most debasing, form.

Of the Emperors Leo the Isaurian and his son Constantine, the great Iconoclasts, the only historians are their enemies. That the founder of this dynasty was of obscure birth, from a district, or rather the borders, of the wild province of Isauria, enhances rather than detracts from the dignity of his character. Among the adventurers who from time to time rose to the throne of Byzantium, none employed less unworthy means, or were less stained with crime, than Leo. Throughout his early career the inimical historians are overawed by involuntary respect for his great military and administrative quali-

Leo the
Isaurian.
A.D. 717.

His charac-
ter.

^f I think that I had not read, certainly had no recollection of Goëthe's line—

“Wunderthätige Bilder sind meist nur schlechte Gemälde,”

quoted in Mr. Lewes' *Life of Goëthe*, p. 313. Edit. 1864.

ties. He had been employed on various dangerous and important services, and the jealousy of the ruling emperor, on more than one occasion, shows that he was already designated by the public voice as one capable of empire. Justinian II. abandoned him with a few troops, in an expedition against the Alani; from this difficulty he extricated himself with consummate courage and dexterity. He appears equally distinguished in valour and in craft. In the most trying situations his incomparable address is as prompt as decisive; against treacherous enemies he does not scruple to employ treachery.

The elevation of an active and enterprising soldier to the throne was imperiously demanded by the times, and hailed with general applause. The first measures of Leo were to secure the tottering empire against her most formidable enemies the Mohammedans, who were encompassing Constantinople on every side. Never had the Byzantine Empire been exposed to such peril as during the siege of Constantinople by Moslemah. Nothing but the indefatigable courage, military skill, and restless activity of Leo, aided by the new invention of the Greek fire, saved the eastern capital from falling seven centuries before its time into the hands of the Mohammedans.⁵ There can be no greater praise to Leo than that his superstitious subjects saw nothing less than the manifest interposition of the tutelary Virgin throughout their unexpected deliverance.

Leo had reigned for ten years, before he declared his hostility to image-worship. But his persecuting spirit had betrayed itself in the compulsory baptism of the Jews and the Montanists (probably some Manichean sect called by that ancient name) in

Leo persecutes Jews and heretics.

⁵ Theophanes *passim*.

Constantinople.^h The effect of these persecutions was not encouraging. The Jews secretly washed off the contamination of baptism, and instead of fasting before the Holy Communion, polluted its sanctity, if they did not annul its blessings by eating common food. The Montanists burned themselves in their houses. In an orthodox emperor, however, these acts would have passed without reprobation, if not with praise.

At the close of these ten years in the reign of Leo, Christendom was astounded by the sudden
Edict against images. proscription of its common religious usages. The edict came forth, interdicting all worship of images. Leo was immediately asserted and believed to be as hostile to the adoration of the Virgin, to the worship of saints and of reliques, as to that of images.ⁱ In the common ear the emperor's language was that of a Jew or a Mohammedan, and fables were soon current that the impulse came from those odious quarters. It was rumoured that while Leo was yet an obscure Isaurian youth named Conon, two Jews met him and promised him the empire of the world if he would grant them one request: this was, to destroy the images throughout Christendom.^j They bound him by an oath in a Christian church! After the young Conon had ascended the throne, he was called on to fulfil his solemn vow.

^h Theophanes, p. 617. Ed. Bonn.

ⁱ οὐ μόνον γὰρ περὶ τὴν σχετικὴν τῶν σεπτῶν εἰκόνων ὁ δυσσεβὴς ἐσφάλλετο προσκύνησιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν πρεσβειῶν τῆς πανάγιου θεοτόκου, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων· καὶ τὰ λείψανα αὐτῶν ὁ παμμίαιρος, ὡς οἱ διδάσκαλοι αὐτοῦ Ἀραβες, ἐβδελύττετο.—Theoph. p. 625.

^j And this was the emperor whose first religious act was the persecution

of the Jews. Neither Pope Gregory nor any of the Western writers, nor even Theophanes, the earliest Byzantine, knew anything of this story. The first version is in a very doubtful oration ascribed to John of Damascus, passes through Glycas and Constantine Manasses, till the fable attains its full growth in Zonaras and Cedrenus. Theophanes gives the story of the Sultan Yezid.

The prototype of the Christian Emperor in Iconoclasm had been the Sultan Yezid of Damascus. Yezid had been promised by a magician a reign of forty years over the Mohammedan world on the single condition of the destruction of images. God had cut off the Mohammedan in the beginning of his impiety, but Leo only followed this sacrilegious and fatal example. His adviser was said to be a certain Besor, a Syrian renegade from Christianity, deeply imbued with Mohammedan antipathies. The real motives of Leo it is impossible to conjecture. Had the rude soldier been brought up in a simpler Christianity among the mountains of his native Isauria? Had the perpetual contrast between the sterner creed and plainer worship of Mohammedanism and the paganised Christianity of his day led him to inquire whether this was the genuine and primitive religion of the Gospel? Had he felt that he could not deny the justice of the charges of idolatry so prodigally made against his religion by the Jews and Mohammedans, and so become anxious to relieve it from this imputation? Had he found his subjects, instead of trusting, in their imminent danger from the Mohammedan invasion, to their own arms, discipline, and courage, entirely reposing on the intercession of the Virgin and the saints and on the magic influence of crosses and pictures? Did he act as statesman, general, or zealot, he pursued his aim with inflexible resolution though not in the first instance without some caution.

For the war which the emperor declared against the images did not at first command their destruction. The first edict prohibited the worship, but only the worship, of all statues and pictures which represented the Saviour, the Virgin, and the saints. The statues and those pictures which hung

A.D. 726.

upon the walls, and were not painted upon them, were to be raised to a greater height, so as not to receive pious kisses or other marks of adoration.^k

About this period an alarming volcanic eruption took place in the *Ægean*. The whole atmosphere was dark as midnight, the sea and the adjacent islands strewn with showers of ashes and of stones. A new island suddenly arose amid this awful convulsion. The emperor beheld in this terrific phenomenon the divine wrath, and attributed it to his patient acquiescence in the idolatry of his subjects. The monks, on the other hand, the implacable adversaries of the emperor and the most ardent defenders of image worship, beheld God's fearful rebuke against the sacrilegious imperial edicts.^m

The first edict was followed, at what interval it is difficult to determine, by a second of far greater severity. It commanded the total destruction of all images,ⁿ the whitewashing the walls of the churches. But if the first edict was everywhere received with the most determined aversion, the second maddened the image worshippers, the mass of mankind, including most of

^k Unfortunately, none of the earlier edicts of the Iconoclastic emperors are extant. It is doubtful, and of course obstinately disputed, whether Leo condescended to require the sanction of any council or synod, or of any number of bishops.—Walch, p. 229.

^m The chronology of these events is in the highest degree obscure. Baronius, Maimbourg, the Pagis, Spanheim, Basnage, Walch, have endeavoured to arrange them in natural and regular sequence. The commencement of the actual strife in the tenth year of Leo's reign gives one certain date, A.D. 726. The death of Pope

Gregory II. another, A.D. 731. The great difficulty is the time at which the second more severe edict followed the first. Some place it as late as 731; but it had manifestly been issued before the first epistle of Gregory. It seems to me as clear that it preceded the tumult at Constantinople, which arose from an attempt to destroy an image; for destruction does not seem to have been commanded by the earlier and milder edict.

ⁿ Anastasius adds that they were to be burned in the most public place in the different cities.—Vit. Greg. II.

the clergy and all the monks, to absolute fury. In the capital the presence of the emperor did not in the least overawe the populace. An imperial officer had orders to destroy a statue of the Saviour in a part of Constantinople called Chalcoopratia. This image was renowned for its miracles. The thronging multitude, chiefly of women, saw with horror the officer mount the ladder. Thrice he struck with his impious axe the holy countenance, which had so benignly looked down upon them. Heaven interfered not, as no doubt they expected; but the women seized the ladder, threw down the officer, and beat him to death with clubs. The emperor sent an armed guard to suppress the tumult; a frightful massacre took place. But the slain were looked upon, some were afterwards worshipped, as martyrs in the holy cause. In religious insurrections that which with one party is suppression of rebellion, with the other is persecution. Leo becomes, in the orthodox histories, little better than a Saracen; the pious were punished with mutilations, scourgings, exile, confiscation; the schools of learning were closed, a magnificent library burned to the ground. This last is no doubt a fable; and the cruelties of Leo were at least told with the darkest colouring. Even his successes in war were ingeniously turned to his condemnation. The failure of the Saracens in an attack on Nicæa was, as usual, attributed to the intervention of the Virgin, not to the valiant resistance of the garrison. The Virgin was content with the death of a soldier who had dared to throw down and trample on her statue. She had appeared to him and foretold his death. The next day her prophecy was fulfilled, his brains were beat out by a stone from a mangonel. But the magnanimity of the Virgin did not therefore withdraw her tutelary protec-

tion from the city. Nicæa escaped, though Leo, besides his disrespect for images, is likewise charged with doubting the intercession of the Mother of God.

Nor did this open resistance take place in Constantinople alone. A formidable insurrection broke out in Greece and in the Ægean islands. A fleet was armed, a new emperor, one Cosmas, proclaimed, and Constantinople menaced by the rebels. The fleet, however, was scattered and destroyed by ships which discharged the Greek fire: the insurrection was suppressed, the leaders either fell or were executed, along with the usurper.* The monks here, and throughout the empire, the champions of this as of every other superstition, were the instigators to rebellion. Few monasteries were without some wonder-working image; the edict struck at once at their influence, their interest, their pride, their most profound religious feelings.

But the more eminent clergy were likewise at first almost unanimous in their condemnation of the emperor. Constantine, bishop of Nacolia, indeed, is branded as his adviser. Another bishop, Theodosius, son of Apsimar, Metropolitan of Ephesus, is named as entering into the war against images. But almost for the first time the bishops of the two Romes, Germanus of Constantinople, and Pope Gregory II., were united in one common cause. Leo attempted to win Germanus to his views, but the aged patriarch (he was now 95 years old) calmly but resolutely resisted the arguments, the promises, the menaces of the emperor.

But the conduct of Gregory II., as leading to more important results, demands more rigid scrutiny. The Byzantine historians represent him as proceeding, at the

first intimation of the hostility of the emperor to image worship, to an act of direct revolt, as prohibiting the payment of tribute by the Italian province.^p This was beyond the power, probably beyond the courage, of Gregory. The great results of the final separation of the West from the inefficient and inglorious sovereignty of the East might excuse or palliate, if he had foreseen them, the disloyalty of Pope Gregory to Leo. But it would be to estimate his political and religious sagacity too highly to endow him with this gift of ambitious prophecy, to suppose him anticipating the full development of Latin Christianity when it should become independent of the East. Like most ordinary minds, and, if we are to judge by his letters, Gregory's was a very ordinary mind, he was merely governed by the circumstances and passions of his time without the least foreknowledge of the result of his actions. The letter of Pope Gregory to the emperor is arrogant without Letter of Gregory II. A.D. 729. dignity, dogmatic without persuasiveness; in the stronger part of the argument far inferior, both in skill and ingenuity, to that of the aged Germanus, or the writer who guided his pen.^q The strange mistakes in the history of the Old Testament, the still stranger interpretations of the New, the loose legends which are advanced as history, give a very low opinion of the knowledge of the times. As a great public document, addressed to the whole Christian world by him who aspired to be the first ecclesiastic, we might be disposed to question its authenticity, if it were not avouched by the full evidence in its favour and its agreement with all the events of the period. After some praise of the golden promise of

^p Theophanes, followed by the later writers.

^q Compare the two letters of Ger-

manus to John of Synnada, and to Thomas of Claudiopolis.—*Conc. Nic. ii.* sess. iv.

orthodoxy, in the declaration of Leo on ascending the throne, and in his conduct up to a certain period, the Pope proceeds, "For ten years you have paid no attention to the images which you now denounce as idols, and whose total destruction and abolition you command. Not the faithful only but infidels are scandalised at your impiety. Christ has condemned those who offend one of his little ones, you fear not to offend the whole world. You say that God has forbidden the worship of things made with hands; who worships them? Why, as emperor and head of Christendom, have you not consulted the wise? The Scriptures, the fathers, the six councils, you treat with equal contempt. These are the coarse and rude arguments suited to a coarse and rude mind like yours, but they contain the truth." Gregory then enters at length into the Mosaic interdiction of idolatry. "The idols of the Gentiles only were forbidden in the commandment, not such images as the Cherubim and Seraphim, or the ornaments made by Bezaleel to the glory of God." It is impossible without irreverence to translate the argument of the Pope, from the partial vision of God to Moses described in the book of Exodus.^r What follows, if on less dangerous ground, is hardly less strange. "Where the body is, says our Lord, there will the eagles be gathered together. The body is Christ, the eagles the religious men who flew from all quarters to behold him. When they beheld him they made a picture of him. Not of him alone,

^r "Si videris me, morieris; sed ascende per foramen petrae et videbis posteriora mea." Gregory no doubt understood this in an awfully mysterious sense, but not without a materialising tendency. The whole

Godhead was revealed in Christ, "nostrarum generationum ætate in novissimis temporibus manifestum seipsum, et posteriora simul et anteriora perfecte nobis ostendit."

they made pictures of James the brother of the Lord, of Stephen, and of all the martyrs; and so having done, they disseminated them throughout the world to receive not worship but reverence." Was this ignorance in Gregory, or effrontery? He then appeals to the likeness of Christ sent to Abgarus, king of Edessa. "God the Father cannot be painted, as his form is not known. Were it known and painted, would you call that an idol?" The pope appeals to the tears of devotion which he himself has shed while gazing on the statue of St. Peter. He denies that the Catholics worship wood and stone, these are memorials only intended to awaken pious feelings.^s They adore them not as gods, for in them they have no hope, they only employ their intercession. "Go," he then breaks out in this contemptuous tone, "Go into a school where children are learning their letters and proclaim yourself a destroyer of images, they would all throw their tablets at your head, and you would thus be taught by these foolish ones what you refuse to learn from the wise." (It might be asked what well-instructed children now would say to a pope who mistook Hezekiah (called Uzziah) for a wicked king, his destroying the brazen serpent for an act of impiety, and who asserted that David placed the brazen serpent in the *Temple*.) "You boast that as Hezekiah after 800 years cast out the brazen serpent from the temple, so after 800 years you have cast out the idols from the churches. Hezekiah truly was your brother, as self-willed, and, like thee, daring to offer violence to the priests of God." "With the power given me by St. Peter," proceeds Gregory, "I could inflict punishment

^s οὐ λατρευτικῶς ἀλλὰ σχετικῶς, "non latris sed habitudine." This is the invariable distinction.

upon thee, but since thou hast heaped a curse on thyself, I leave thee to endure it." The pope returns to his own edification while beholding the pictures and images in the churches. The passage is of interest, as showing the usual subjects of these paintings. "The miracles of the Lord; the Virgin Mother, with the infant Jesus on her breast, surrounded by choirs of angels; the Last Supper; the Raising of Lazarus; the miracles of giving sight to the blind; the curing the paralytic and the leper; the feeding the multitudes in the desert; the transfiguration; the crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension of Christ; the gift of the Holy Ghost; the sacrifice of Isaac," which seems to have been thought, doubtless as typifying the Redeemer's death, a most pathetic subject. The pope then reproaches Leo for not consulting the aged and venerable Germanus, and for listening rather to that Ephesian fool the son of Apsimar. The wise influence of Germanus had persuaded Constantine, the son of Constans, to summon the sixth council. There the emperor had declared that he would sit, a humble hearer, to execute the decrees of the prelates, and to banish those whom they condemned. "If his father had erred from the faith he would be the first to anathematise him." So met the sixth council. "The doctrines of the Church are in the province of the bishops not of the emperor: as the prelates should abstain from affairs of state, so princes from those of the Church."† "You demand a council:—revoke your edicts, cease to destroy images, a council will not be needed." Gregory then relates the insult to the image

† "Scis sanctæ ecclesiæ dogmata non imperatorum esse, sed pontificum: ideo ecclesiis præpositi sunt pontifices a reipublicæ negotiis abstinentes et imperatores ergo similiter ab ecclesiasticis abstineant, et quæ sibi commissa sunt, capeant." This was new doctrine in the East.

of the Saviour in Constantinople. Not only those who were present at that sacrilegious scene, but even the barbarians had revenged themselves on the statues of the emperor, which had before been received in Italy with great honour. Hence the invasion of the Lombards, their occupation of Ravenna, their menaces that they would advance and seize Rome. "It is your own folly which has disabled you from defending Rome; and you would terrify us and threaten to send to Rome and break in pieces the statue of St. Peter, and carry away Pope Gregory in chains, as Constans did his predecessor Martin. Knowest thou not that the popes have been the barrier-wall between the East and the West—the mediators of peace? I will not enter into a contest. I have but to retire four-and-twenty miles into Campania, and you may as well follow the winds. The officer who persecuted Pope Martin was cut off in his sins; Martin in exile was a saint, and miracles are performed at his tomb in the Chersonese. Would that I might share the fate of Martin. But, for the statue of St. Peter, which all the kingdoms of the West esteem as a *god on earth*, the whole West would take a terrible revenge." I have but to retire and despise your threats; but I warn you that I shall be guiltless of the blood that will be shed; on your head it will fall. May God instil his fear into your heart! May I soon receive letters announcing your conversion! May the Saviour dwell in your heart, drive away those who urge you to these scandals, and restore peace to the world!"^x

^x "Quam omnia Occidentis regna, velut Deum terrestrem habent." This looks something like idolatry.

^x Gregory alludes with triumph to his conquest over the northern kings,

who are submitting to baptism from the hands of his missionary, S. Boniface. "Non viam ingredimur in extremas occidentis regiones versus illos, qui sanctum baptismum efflagitant.

If Gregory expected this expostulatory and defiant epistle to work any change in Leo, he was doomed to disappointment. In a subsequent, but shorter
 Second letter. letter, he attempted to appal the emperor by the great names of Gregory the Wonder-worker, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Theologian, of Basil, and of Chrysostom, to whose authority he appealed as sanctioning the worship of images. He held up the pious examples of those obedient sons of the Church, Constantine the Great, Theodosius the Great, Valentinian the Great, and Constantine who held the sixth council. "What are our churches but things made with hands, of stone, wood, straw, clay, lime? but they are adorned with paintings of the miracles wrought by the saints, the passion of the Lord, his glorious mother, his apostles. On these pictures men spend their whole fortunes; and men and women, with newly-baptised children in their arms and grown-up youths from all parts of the world come, and, pointing out these histories, lift up their minds and hearts to God." The pope renews his earnest admonitions to the emperor to obey the prelates of the Church in all spiritual things. "You persecute us and afflict us with a worldly and carnal arm. We, unarmed and defenceless, can but send a devil to humble you, to deliver you to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, and the salvation of the spirit. Why, you ask, have not the councils *commanded* image-worship? Why have they not commanded us to eat and drink?" (Images, Gregory seems to have considered as necessary to the spiritual as food to the corporeal life.) "Images have been borne by bishops to councils; no religious man

Cum enim illuc episcopus misissem, inclinarent et baptizarentur eorum et sanctæ ecclesiæ nostræ clericos, principes, quod exoptent, ut eorum nondum adducti sunt ut capita sua, sim susceptor."

goes on a pilgrimage without an image." "Write to all the world that Gregory, the Bishop of Rome, and Germanus, Bishop of Constantinople, are in error concerning images; cast the blame on us, who have received from God the power to bind and to loose."

When Gregory addressed these letters to the Emperor Leo, the tumult in Constantinople, the first public act of rebellion against Iconoclasm, had taken place; but the aged Bishop Germanus was not yet degraded from his see. Germanus, with better temper and more skilful argument, had defended the images of the East.⁷ Before his death he was deposed or compelled to retire from his see. He died most probably in peace, his extreme age may well account for his death. His personal ill-treatment by the emperor is the legend of a later age to exalt him into a martyr.²

Degradation
of Germanus.

A.D. 731

But these two powerful prelates were not the only champions of their cause, whose writings made a strong impression on their age. It is singular that the most admired defender of images in the East, was a subject not of the emperor but of the Mohammedan sultan. John of Damascus was famed as the most learned man in the East, and it may show either the tolerance, the ignorance, or the contempt of the Mohammedans for these Christian controversies, that writings which became celebrated all over the East, should issue from one of their capital cities, Damascus.³

John of
Damascus.

The ancestors of John, according to his biographer, when Damascus fell into the hands of the Arabs, had almost alone remained faithful to Christianity. They

⁷ Compare his letters in Mansi, in the report of the Second Council of Nicæa.

² Cedrenus, iv. 3.

³ Vit. Joann. Damasceni, prefixed to his works.

commanded the respect of the conquerors, and were employed in judicial offices of trust and dignity, to administer no doubt the Christian law to the Christian subjects of the sultan. His father, besides this honourable rank, had amassed great wealth; all this he devoted to the redemption of Christian slaves, on whom he bestowed their freedom. John was the reward of these pious actions. John was made a child of light immediately on his birth. This, as his biographer intimates, was an affair of some difficulty and required much courage. The father was anxious to keep his son aloof from the savage habits of war and piracy, to which the youth of Damascus were addicted, and to devote him to the pursuit of knowledge. The Saracen pirates of the sea-shore, neighbouring to Damascus, swept the Mediterranean and brought in Christian captives from all quarters. A monk named Cosmas had the misfortune to fall into the hands of these freebooters. He was set apart for death, when his executioners, Christian slaves no doubt, fell at his feet, and entreated his intercession with the Redeemer. The Saracens inquired of Cosmas who he was. He replied that he had not the dignity of a priest, he was a simple monk, and burst into tears. The father of John was standing by, and asked, not without wonder, how one already dead to the world could weep so bitterly for the loss of life? The monk answered, that he did not weep for his life, but for the treasures of knowledge which would be buried with him in the grave. He then recounted all his attainments: he was a proficient in rhetoric, logic, in the moral philosophy of Aristotle and of Plato, in natural philosophy, in arithmetic, geometry, and music, and in astronomy. From astronomy he had risen to the mysteries of theology, and was versed in all the

divinity of the Greeks. He could not but lament that he was to die without leaving an heir to his vast patrimony of science, to die an unprofitable servant who had wasted his talent. The father of John begged the life of the monk from the Saracen governor, gave him at once his freedom, placed him in his family, and confided to him the education of his son. The pupil in time exhausted all the acquirements of his teacher. The monk assured the father of John that his son surpassed himself in every branch of knowledge. Cosmas entreated to be dismissed, that he might henceforth dedicate himself to that higher philosophy, to which the youthful John had pointed his way. He retired to the desert, to the monastery of St. Saba, where he would have closed his days in peace, had he not been compelled to take on himself the Bishopric of Maiuma.

The attainments of the young John of Damascus commanded the veneration of the Saracens; he was compelled reluctantly to accept an office of still higher trust and dignity than that held by his father. As the Iconoclastic controversy became more violent, John of Damascus entered the field against the emperor. His three orations in favour of image-worship were disseminated with the utmost activity throughout Christendom.

The biographer of John brings a charge of base and treacherous revenge against the emperor. It is one of those legends of which the monkish East is so fertile, and cannot be traced, even in allusion, to any document earlier than the life of John. Leo having obtained, through his emissaries, one of John's circular epistles in his own handwriting, caused a letter to be forged, containing a proposal from John of Damascus to betray his native city to the Christians. The emperor, with specious magnanimity, sent this letter to the sultan.

The indignant Mohammedan ordered the guilty hand of John to be cut off, a mild punishment for such a treason! John entreated that the hand might be restored to him, knelt before the image of the Virgin, prayed, fell asleep, and woke with his hand as before. The miracle convinced the sultan of his innocence: he was reinstated in his place of honour. But John yearned for monastic retirement. He too withdrew to the monastery of St. Saba. There a severe abbot put his humility and his obedience to the sternest test. He was sent in the meanest and most beggarly attire to sell baskets in the market-place of Damascus, where he had been accustomed to appear in the dignity of office, and to vend this poor ware at exorbitant prices. As a penance for an act of kindness to a dying brother, he was set to clean the filth from all the cells of his brethren. An opportune vision rebuked the abbot for thus wasting the splendid talents of his inmate. John was allowed to devote himself to religious poetry, which was greatly admired, and to his theologic arguments in defence of images.

The fame of this wonder of his age rests chiefly on these writings, of which the extensive popularity attests their power over the minds of his readers. His courage in opposing the emperor, and in asserting the superior authority of the Church in all ecclesiastic affairs, considering that he was secure either in Damascus or in his monastery and a subject of the Saracenic kingdom, is by no means astonishing. The three famous orations repeat, with but slight variations, each after the other, the same arguments; some the ordinary and better arguments for the practice, expressed with greater ingenuity and elegance than by the other writers of the day, occasionally with surpassing force

Orations
of John.

and beauty, not without a liberal admixture of irrelevant and puerile matter; the same invectives against his opponents, as if by refusing to worship the images of Christ, his mother, and the saints, they refused to worship the venerable beings themselves. Pictures are great standing memorials of triumph over the devil; whoever destroys these memorials is a friend of the devil; to reprove material images is Manicheism, as betraying the hatred of matter which is the first tenet of that odious heresy. It was a kind of Docetism, too, asserting the unreality of the body of the Saviour. At the close of each oration occurs almost the same citation of authorities, not omitting the memorable one of the Hermit, who was assailed by the dæmon of uncleanness. The dæmon offered to leave the holy man at rest if he would cease to worship an image of the Virgin. The hard-pressed hermit made the rash vow, but in his distress of mind communicated his secret to a famous abbot, his spiritual adviser. "Better," said the abbot, "that you should visit every brothel in the town, than abstain from the worship of the holy image."

The third oration concludes with a copious list of miracles wrought by certain images; an argument more favourable to an incredulous adversary, as showing the wretched superstition into which the worship of images had degenerated and as tending to fix the accusation of idolatry.

From the death of Leo the Isaurian the history of Iconoclasm belongs exclusively to the East, until the Council of Frankfort interfered to regulate the worship of images in the Transalpine parts of Europe. Gregory III., the successor of Gregory II., whose pontificate filled up the remaining years of Leo's reign, inflexibly pursued the same policy as his predecessor. In the

West, all power, almost all pretension to power, excepting over Sicily and Calabria, expired with Leo;^b and this independence partly arose out of, and was immeasurably strengthened by, the faithful adherence of the West to image worship; but the revolt or alienation of Italy from the Eastern empire will occupy a later chapter in Christian history.

Leo was succeeded by his son Constantine. The name by which this emperor was known is a Constantine Copronymus. perpetual testimony to the hatred of a large part of his subjects. Even in his infancy he was believed to have shown a natural aversion to holy things, and in his baptism to have defiled the font. Copronymus sounded to Greek ears as a constant taunt against the filthy and sacrilegious character of Constantine.

The accession of Constantine, although he had already been acknowledged for twenty years, A.D. 741. with his father, as joint-emperor, met formidable resistance. The contest for the throne was a strife between the two religious parties which divided the empire. During the absence of Constantine, on an expedition against the Saracens, a sudden and dangerous insurrection placed his brother-in-law, Artavasdus, on the throne. Constantinople was gained to the party of the usurper by treachery. The city was induced to submit to Artavasdus only by a rumour, industriously propagated and generally believed, of the death of Constantine. The emperor on one occasion had been in danger of surprise, and escaped by the swiftness of his horses. In the capital, as throughout Greece and the European part of the Empire, the triumph of Artavasdus was followed by the restoration of the images. Anas-

^b Leo died June, 741. Gregory III. in the same year.

tasius, the dastard Patriarch of Constantinople, as he had been the slave of Leo, now became the slave of the usurper, and worshipped images with the same zeal with which he had destroyed them. He had been the principal actor in the deception of the people by the forged letters which announced the death of Constantine. He plunged with more desperate recklessness into the party of Artavasdus. The monks, and all over whom they had influence, took up the cause of the usurper; but the mass of the people, from loyal respect for the memory of Leo, or from their confidence in the vigorous character of Constantine and attachment to the legitimate succession, from indifference or aversion to image-worship, still wavered, and submitted, rather than clamorously rejoiced in the coronation of Artavasdus. The Patriarch came forward, seized the crucifix from the altar, and swore by the Crucified that Constantine had assured him that it was but folly to worship Jesus as the Son of God; that he was a mere man, that the Virgin Mother had borne him, only as his own mother Mary had borne himself. The furious people at once proclaimed the deposition of Constantine, no doubt to the great triumph of the image-worshippers. Besor, the renegade counsellor of Leo, to whom popular animosity attributed the chief part in the destruction of the images, fell in the first conflict.

But Constantine Copronymus with the religious opinions inherited the courage, the military abilities, and the popularity with the army which had distinguished his father Leo. After some vicissitudes, a battle took place near Ancyra, fought with all the ferocity of civil and religious war. The historian expresses his horror that, among Christians, fathers should thus be engaged in the slaughter of their children,

brothers of brothers.^c Constantine followed up his victory by the siege of the capital. After an obstinate resistance, and after having suffered all the horrors of famine, Constantinople was taken. Artavasdus escaped for a short time, but was soon captured, and brought in chains before the conqueror. An unsuccessful usurper risks his life on the hazard of his enterprise. It is difficult to decide whether the practice of blinding, instead of putting to death in such cases, was a concession to Christian humanity. The other common alternative of shutting up the rival for the throne in a monastery and disqualifying him for empire by the tonsure, was not likely to occur to Constantine, nor would it have been safe, considering the general hatred of the monks to the emperor. Artavasdus was punished by the loss of his eyes; it was wanton cruelty afterwards to expose him, with his sons and principal adherents, during the races in the Hippodrome, to the contempt of the people.

Constantine was a soldier, doubtless of a fierce temper; the blinding, and mutilation of many, the beheading a few of his enemies, the abandonment of the houses of the citizens to the plunder of his troops, was the natural course of Byzantine revolution; and these cruelties have no doubt lost nothing in the dark representations of the emperor's enemies, the only historians of the times. But they suffered as rebels in arms against their sovereign, not as image-worshippers. The fate of the Patriarch Anastasius was the most extraordinary. His eyes were put out, he was led upon an ass, with his face to the tail, through the city; and after all this mutilation and insult, for which, considering his tergiversation

^c Theophanes *in loco*.

and impudent mendacity, it is difficult to feel much compassion; he was reinstated in the Patriarchal dignity. The clergy in the East had never been arrayed in the personal sanctity which, in ordinary occasions, they possessed in the West; but could Constantine have any other object in this act than A.D. 743. the degradation of the whole order in public estimation?

For ten years Constantine refrained from any stronger measures against image-worship. The overthrow of Artavasdus no doubt threw that large party of time-servers, the worshippers of the will of the emperor, on his side. His known severity of character would impress even his more fanatical opponents with awe; many images would vanish again, as it were, of their own accord; even the monks might observe some prudence in their resistance. During these ten years Constantine had secured the frontiers of the Empire against the Saracens in the East, and the Bulgarians on the North. His throne had been strengthened by the birth of an heir. A dreadful pestilence, which, contrary to the usual course, travelled from west to east, spread from Calabria to Sicily, and throughout great part of the Empire. The popular mind, and even the government, must have been fully occupied by its ravages. The living, it is said, scarcely sufficed to bury the dead; the gardens within the city, and the vineyards without, were turned into a vast cemetery. The image-worshippers beheld in this visitation the vengeance of God against the Iconoclasts.^a

In the tenth year of Constantine rumours spread abroad of secret councils held for the total destruction

^a διὰ τὴν ἀσεβῶς γεγεννημένην εἰς τὰς ἱερὰς εἰκονας ὑπὸ τῶν κωνσταντίνων κατένεξιν.—Theophanes sub ann. 738, p. 651

of images. Either the emperor must have prepared the public mind for this great change with
A.D. 746. consummate address, or reverence for images must have been less deeply rooted in the East than in the West, otherwise it can scarcely be supposed that so large a number of the clergy as appeared at the Third Council of Constantinople would have slavishly assented to the strong measures of the emperor.

Three hundred and forty-eight bishops formed this synod, which aspired to the dignity of the
Third Council of Constantinople. Seventh Œcumenic Council. Its adversaries objected the absence of all the great Patriarchs, especially of the Pope, who was present neither in person nor by his delegates. The Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem were now cut off, as it were, from Christendom; they were the subjects of an unbelieving sovereign, perhaps could not, if they had been so disposed, obey the summons of the emperor. The Bishop of Rome was, if not in actual revolt, in contumacious opposition to him, who still claimed to be his sovereign. The Patriarch of Constantinople had lost all weight. The Bishop of Ephesus, occasionally the Bishop of Perga, presided in the council.

Part of the proceedings of this assembly have been preserved in the records of the rival council, the second held at Nicæa. The passages are cited in the original words, followed by a confutation, sanctioned apparently by the Nicene bishops. The confutation is in the tone of men assured of the sympathy of their audience. It deals far less in grave argument than in contemptuous crimination. The ordinary name for the Iconoclasts is the arraigners of Christianity.* It assumes boldly that

* Χριστιανοκατήγοροι: is the term framed for the occasion.

the worship of images was the ancient, immemorial, unquestionable usage of the Church, recognised and practised by all the fathers, and sanctioned by the six General Councils: that the refusal to worship images is a new and rebellious heresy. Every quotation from the fathers which makes against images is rejected as a palpable forgery, so proved, as it is asserted, by its discordance with the universal tradition and practice of the Church.

But the Council of Constantinople had manifestly set the example of this peremptory and unargumentative dictation: it may be reasonably doubted whether it attempted a dispassionate and satisfactory answer to the better reasonings of the image-worshippers. It proscribes the lawless and blasphemous art of painting.^f The fathers of Constantinople assume, as boldly as the brethren of Nicæa their sanctity, that all images are the invention of the devil; that they are idols in the same sense as those of the heathen.^g Nor do they hesitate to impute community of sentiment with the worst heretics to their opponents. They thought that they held the image-worshippers in an inextricable dilemma. If the painters represented only the humanity of Christ, they were Nestorians; if they attempted to mingle it with the Divinity, they were Eutychians, circumscribing the infinite, and confounding the two substances.^h It

^f τὴν ἀθέμιτον τῶν ζωγράφων τέχνην βλασφημοῦσαν.

^g Faith they asserted came by *hearing*, and hearing from the Word of God.—P. 467.

^h They made him *ἀθεωτὸν*. The fathers of Nicæa were indignant at the barbarism of this word (p. 443). Their opponents might have retorted

the use of the whimsical hybrid *φαιλόγραφοι*. The most remarkable passage, as regards art, in this part of the controversy, is a description of a painting of the martyrdom of S. Euphemia, from the writings of Asterius, Bishop of Amasia. This picture, or rather series of pictures, must have been of many figures, grouped with

was impiety to represent Christ without his divinity, Arianism to undeify him, to despoil him of his godhead.

The Council of Nicæa admits the perfect unanimity of the Council of Constantinople. These 348 bishops concurred in pronouncing their anathema against all who should represent the Incarnate Word by material form or colours, who should not restrict themselves to the pure spiritual conception of the Christ, as he is seated, superior in brightness to the sun, on the right hand of the Father; against all who should confound the two natures of Christ in one human image, or who should separate the manhood from the godhead in the Second Person of the invisible Trinity; against all who should not implore the intercession of the Virgin in pure faith, as above all visible and invisible things;¹ against all who should set up the deaf and lifeless images of the saints, and who do not rather paint the living likenesses of their virtues in their own hearts. All images, whether statues or paintings, were to be forcibly removed from the churches; every one who henceforth should set up an image, if a bishop or priest, was to be degraded; if a layman, excommunicated. The one only image of the Redeemer, which might be lawfully worshipped, was in the Holy Sacrament; at the same time, therefore, that all images were to be removed, all

skill, and in the judgement of the bishop with wonderful expression; the various passions were blended with great felicity. Asterius compares it with the famous picture of Medea killing her children, which his language, somewhat vague indeed, might lead to the supposition that he had actually seen. The taste of Asterius

may be somewhat doubtful, since in one picture he describes the executioner drawing the teeth of the victim: the reality of the blood which flowed from her lips filled him with horror.—Labbe, p. 489.

¹ ὑπερέραν τε εἶναι πάσης ἡράνης καὶ ἀοράτου κτίσεως.

respect was to be paid to the consecrated vessels of the Church.

Was then all this host of bishops, the concordant cry of whose anathema rose to heaven (according to the fathers of Nicæa, like that of the guilty cities of the Old Testament) only subservient to the Imperial Will?^k Or had a wide-spread repugnance to images grown up in the East? Were the clergy and the monks in hostile antagonism on this vital question? It appears evident, that the old ineradicable aversion to matter, the constant dread of entangling the Deity in this debasing bondage, which has been traced throughout all the Oriental controversies, lay at the bottom of much of this tergiversation. "We all subscribe," they declared at the close of their sitting, "we are all of one mind, all of one orthodoxy, worshipping with the spirit the pure spiritual Godhead."^m They concluded with their prayers for the pious emperor, who had given peace to the Church, who had extirpated idolatry, who had triumphed over those who taught that error, and settled for ever the true doctrine. They proceed to curse by name the principal assertors of image-worship. "Anathema against the double-minded Germanus, the worshipper of wood! Anathema against George (of Cyprus), the falsifier of the traditions of the fathers! Anathema against Mansar (they called by this unchristian-sounding name the famous John of Damascus), the Saracen in heart, the traitor to the Empire; Mansar the teacher of impiety, the false interpreter of Holy Scripture!"

^k ἡ κραυγὴ αὐτῶν τοῦ ἀναθέματος σοδομικῶς καὶ γομορριχῶς πεπλήθυνται.—Labbe, p. 526.

^m πάντες νοερῶς τῇ νοερᾷ θεότητι λατρεύοντες προσκυνούμεν.

CHAPTER VIII.

Second Council of Nicæa. Close of Iconoclasm.

THUS was image-worship proscribed by a council, in numbers at least of weight, in the severest and most comprehensive terms. The work of demolition was committed to the imperial officers; only with strict injunctions, not perhaps always obeyed, to respect the vessels, the priestly vestments, and other furniture of the churches, and the cross, the naked cross without any image.^a

But if the emperor had overawed, or bought, or compelled the seemingly willing assent of so large a body of the eastern clergy, the formidable monks were still in obstinate implacable opposition to his will. The wretched Anastasius had died just before the opening of the council; and the emperor himself, it is said, ascended the pulpit, and proclaimed Constantine Bishop of Sylæum, œcumenic Patriarch and Bishop of Constantinople. Constantine had been a monk, and this appointment might be intended to propitiate that powerful interest, but Constantine, unlike his brethren, was an ardent Iconoclast.

The emperor was a soldier, and fierce wars with the Saracens and Bulgarians were not likely to soften a temper naturally severe and remorseless. He had committed his imperial authority in a deadly strife for the unattainable object of compelling his subjects to be

^a The crucifix was of a later period.—See *Hist. of Christianity*, iii. p. 380.

purser and more spiritual worshippers of God than they were disposed to be; not suspecting that his own sanguinary persecutions were more unchristian than their superstitions. It was now fanaticism encountering fanaticism. Everywhere the monks preached resistance to the imperial decree, and enough has been seen of their turbulent and intractable conduct to make us conclude that their language at least would keep no bounds. Stephen, the great martyr of this controversy, had lived as a hermit in a cave near Sinope for thirty years. The monks in great numbers had taken refuge in the desert, where they might watch in secret over their tutelary images; and not monks alone, but a vast multitude of the devout, crowded around the cell of Stephen to hear his denunciations against the breakers of images. The emperor ordered him to be carried away from his cell, the resort of so many dangerous pilgrims, and to be shut up in a cloister at Chrysopolis. The indignation of the monks was at its height. One named Andrew hastened from his dwelling in the desert, boldly confronted the emperor in the church of St. Mammas, and sternly addressed him—"If thou art a Christian, why dost thou treat Christians with such indignity?" The emperor so far commanded his temper, as simply to order the committal of the monk to prison; he afterwards summoned him again to his presence. The mildest term that Andrew would use to address the emperor, was a second Valens, another Julian. Constantine's anger got the mastery; he commanded the monk to be scourged in the Hippodrome, and then to be strangled. The sisters of Andrew hardly saved his remains from being cast into the sea.^b

^b Theopnazer *in loc.*

For several years either the occupation of the emperor by foreign wars, or the greater prudence of the monks, enforced by this terrible example, suspended at least their more violent collisions with the authorities.

The monk Stephen. Stephen still continued to preach in his cloister against the sin of the Iconoclasts.^c The emperor sent the Patriarch to persuade him to subscribe the decrees of the Council of Constantinople. The Patriarch's eloquence was vain. The emperor either allowed or compelled the aged monk to retire to the wild rock of Proconnesus, where, to consummate his sanctity, he took his stand upon a pillar. His followers assembled in crowds about him, and built their cells around the pillar of the saint. But the zeal of Stephen would not be confined within that narrow sphere. He returned to the city, and in bold defiance of the imperial orders denounced the Iconoclasts. He was seized, cast into prison, and there treated with unusual harshness. But even there the zeal of his followers found access. Constantine exclaimed, in a paroxysm of careless anger, "Am I or this monk the emperor of the world?" The word of the emperor was enough for some of his obsequious courtiers; they rushed, broke open the prison, dragged out the old man along the streets, with every wanton cruelty, and cast his body at last into the common grave of the public malefactors.

Persecution of the monks. The emperor took now a sterner and more desperate resolution. He determined to root out monkery itself. An old grievance was revived. The emperor and the people were enraged, or pretended to be enraged, that the monks decoyed the best soldiers from the army, especially one George Syncletus, and

^c Acta S. Stephani, in *Analectis Græcis*, p. 396.

persuaded them to turn recluses.^d The emperor compelled the patriarch not only to mount the pulpit and swear by the holy cross that he would never worship images, but immediately to break his monastic vows, to join the imperial banquet, to wear a festal garland, to eat meat, and to listen to the profane music of the harpers.

Then came a general ordinance, that the test of signing the articles of Constantinople should be enforced on all the clergy, and all the more distinguished monks.^e On their refusal the monks were driven from their cloisters, which were given up to profane and secular uses. Consecrated virgins were forced to marry; monks were compelled, each holding the hand of a woman, doubtless not of the purest character, to walk round the Hippodrome among the jeers and insults of the populace. Throughout the empire they were exposed to the lawless persecutions of the imperial officers. Their zeal or their obstinacy was chastised by scourgings, imprisonments, mutilations, and even death. The monasteries were plundered, and by no scrupulous or reverent hands; churches are said to have been despoiled of all their sacred treasures, the holy books burned, feasts and revels profaned the most hallowed sanctuaries. Multitudes fled to the neighbouring kingdoms of the less merciless Barbarians; many found refuge in the West, especially in Rome. The Prefect of Thrace was the most obsequious agent of his master's tyranny. Throughout that Theme the monks were

^d This, according to the martyrologist of Stephen, was a trick of the Emperor, with whom George had a secret understanding, to bring odium on the monks. *ὁ ἀσεβέστατος, ἀπητεῖ ἀρχιερεῖς τε πάντας, καὶ τῶν μοναζόντων τοὺς περιβοήτους ἐπ' ἀρέτῃ, ταῦτα ὑποσημάνασθαι.* — Compare Cencil.

^e *τόμον συνοδικὸν αὐτὰ καλέσας* Nic. ii. p. 510.

forced to abandon their vows of solitude and celibacy under pain of being blinded and sent into exile. Monasteries, with all their estates and property, were confiscated. Reliques as well as images, in some cases no doubt books,^f and the whole property of the convents was pillaged or burned by the ignorant soldiery. The personal cruelties against the monks will not bear description; the prefect is said not to have left one in the whole Theme who ventured to wear the monastic habit.

In Constantinople a real or suspected conspiracy against the emperor involved some of the noblest patri-
 cians, and some who filled the highest offices of state, in the same persecution. Eight or nine of the more distinguished were dragged, amid the shouts of the rabble, round the Hippodrome, and then put to death. The fate of two brothers, named Constantine, moved general commiseration. The prefect was scourged and deposed for not having suppressed these signs of public sympathy. Others were blinded, cruelly scourged, and sent into exile.^g The patriarch himself was accused of having used disrespectful language towards the emperor. Already he had been required to acquit himself of imputing Nestorianism to his master; now his accusers swore on the cross that they had heard him hold conference with one of the conspirators. Constantine ordered the imperial seal to be affixed on the palace of the patriarch, and sent him into banishment.

But this miserable slave of the imperial will was not

^f Some books were burned as containing pictures. One is mentioned in a statement made to the Council of Nicæa: ἀργυρᾶς πτύχας ἔχει, καὶ ἐκατέωθεν ταῖς εἰκόσι πάντων τῶν ἁγίων κεκόσμηται — Pictures illuminated on a silver ground?—Counc. Nic., p. 373.

^g Theophanes, compared with statement before the Nicene Council.

allowed to shroud himself in obscure retirement. He had consented to the consecration of Nicetas, an eunuch of Slavonian descent, in his place. For some new offence, real or supposed, the exiled patriarch was brought back to the capital, scourged so cruelly that he could not walk, and then carried in a ^{His death.} litter, and exposed in the great church before all the people assembled to hear the public recital of the charges made against him, and to behold his degradation. At each charge the secretary of his successor smote him on the face. He was then set up in the pulpit, and while Nicetas read the sentence of excommunication, another bishop stripped him of his metropolitan pall, and calling him by the opprobrious name Scotiopsis, face of darkness, led him backwards out of the church. The next day his head, beard, eyebrows, were shaved; in a short and sleeveless dress he was put upon an ass, and paraded through the circus (his own nephew, a hideous, deformed youth, leading the ass) while the populace jeered, shouted, spat upon him. He was then thrown down, trodden on, and in that state lay till the games were over. Some days after the emperor sent to demand a formal declaration of the orthodoxy of his own faith, and of the authority of the council. The poor wretch acknowledged both in the amplest manner; as a reward he was beheaded, while still in a state of excommunication, and his remains treated with the utmost ignominy. The historian adds, as an aggravation of the emperor's ferocity, that the patriarch had baptised two of his children.^h

This odious scene, blackened it may be by the sectarian hatred of the later annalists, all of whom abhorred Iconoclasm, has been related at length, in order

^h Theophanes, p. 681.

to contrast more fully the position of the Bishop of Rome. This was the second patriarch of Constantinople who had been thus barbarously treated, and seemingly without the sympathy of the people; and now, in violation of all canonical discipline, the imperial will had raised an eunuch to the patriarchate. What wonder that pontiffs like Gregory II. and Gregory III. should think themselves justified in throwing off the yoke of such a government, and look with hope to the sovereignty of the less barbarous Barbarians of the North—Barbarians who, at least, had more reverence for the dignity of the sacerdotal character!

If the Byzantine historians, all image-worshippers, have not greatly exaggerated the cruelties of their implacable enemy Constantine Copronymus, they have assuredly not done justice to his nobler qualities, his valour, incessant activity, military skill, and general administration of the sinking empire, which he maintained unviolated by any of its formidable enemies, and with imposing armies, during a reign of thirty-five years, not including the twenty preceding during which he ruled as the colleague of his father Leo. Constantine died, during a campaign against the Bulgarians, of a fever which, in the charitable judgment of his adversaries, gave him a foretaste of the pains of hell. His dying lips ordered prayers and hymns to be offered to the Virgin, for whom he had always professed the most profound veneration, utterly inconsistent, his enemies supposed, with his hostility to her sacred images.

A female had been the principal mover in the great change of Christianity from a purely spiritual worship to that paganising form of religion which grew up with such rapidity in the succeeding centuries; a female was

Character
and death of
Constantine
Copronymus.

A.D. 775.

the restorer of images in the East, which have since, with but slight interruption, maintained their sanctity. The first, Helena, the mother of Constantine ^{Helena and Irene.} the Great, was a blameless and devout woman, who used the legitimate influence of her station, munificence, and authority over her imperial son, to give that splendour, which to her piety appeared becoming, to the new religion; to communicate to the world all those excitements of symbols, reliques, and sacred memorials which she found so powerful in kindling her own devotion. The second, the Empress Irene, wife to the son and heir of Constantine Copronymus, an ambitious, intriguing, haughty princess, never lost sight of political power in the height of her religious zeal, and was at length guilty of the most atrocious crime against God and womanhood.ⁱ

Irene, during the reign of her husband Leo, surnamed the Chazar, did not openly betray her inclination to the image-worship which she had solemnly forsworn under her father-in-law Constantine. Leo was a ^{Leo IV.} man of feeble constitution and gentle mind, controlled by the strongest influences of religion. He endeavoured to allay the heat of the conflicting parties. His first acts gave some hopes to the image-worshippers that he was favourably disposed to the Mother of God and to the monks (these interests the monks represented as inseparable); he appointed some metropolitans from the abbots of monasteries.^k

The short reign of Leo IV. is remarkable for the attempt of the emperor to re-introduce a more popular

ⁱ The Pope Hadrian anticipated a new Constantine and a new Helena in Irene and her son.—Hadrian, Epist. apud Labbe, p. 102.

^k ἔδοξεν εὐσεβῆς εἶναι πρὸς ὀλίγον χρόνον, καὶ φίλος τῆς θεοτόκου καὶ τῶν μοναχῶν.—Theophan., p. 695.

element into the public administration—a kind of representative assembly;—and the general voice, in
A.D. 775-780. gratitude to Leo, demanded the elevation of his infant son to the rank of Augustus. The prophetic heart of the parent foresaw the danger. He was conscious of his own feeble health; to leave an unprotected infant on the throne was (according to all late precedent in the Byzantine empire) to doom him to death. Leo assembled not the senate and nobles alone, the chief officers of the army and of the court, but likewise the people of Constantinople. He explained the cause of his hesitation, confessed his fears, and demanded and received a solemn oath upon the cross, that on his death they would acknowledge no other emperor but his son. The next day he proclaimed his son Augustus: the signatures of the whole people to their oath were received and deposited, amid loud acclamations that they would lay down their lives for the emperor, on the table of the Holy Communion.

A few months matured a conspiracy. Nicephorus, the emperor's brother, was designed for the
Conspiracy repressed. throne. But again the emperor, instead of putting forth the strong and revengeful arm of despotism, appealed to the people. In a full assembly he produced the proofs of the conspiracy, and left the cause to the popular judgement. The general voice declared the conspirators guilty of a capital crime, and renewed their vows of fidelity to the infant emperor. But the gentle Leo spared his brother; some few of the conspirators were put to death, others incapacitated for future mischief by the tonsure;—thus the greatest honour, that of the priesthood, had become a punishment for crime! The moderation of Leo induced him to appoint as Patriarch of Constantinople, Paul, a

Cypriot by birth, as yet of no higher rank than a reader; a man willing to shrink and keep aloof from the controversy of the day. Leo was ill rewarded. The monkish party, watching no doubt his declining health, and knowing the secret sentiments of the empress, introduced some small images, in direct violation of the law, into the palace, and even into her private chamber. Some deeper real or suspected cause of apprehension must have existed in the mind of the emperor to make him depart from his wonted leniency. Many of the principal officers were seized and cast into prison, where one of them died, in the following reign held to be a martyr, the rest became distinguished monks. But from that time so strong was the hatred of the image-worshippers, that Leo was branded as a cruel persecutor; his death was attributed to an act of sacrilege. He was a great admirer of precious stones, and took away and wore a crown, the offering of the Emperor Heraclius to some church. The fatal circle burned into his head, which broke out into carbuncles of which he died. There was no need to invent this fable to account for the death of one so infirm as Leo; still less to suggest suspicions, on the other side, that his death was caused by poison.

Death of Leo.
A. D. 780.

Irene at once seized the government in the name of her son Constantine, who was but ten years old. An attempt was made on the part of Nicephorus, the rebel brother of Leo, to supplant the empress in the regency and in the tutelage of her son. It was suppressed; the chiefs of the faction punished by the scourge and exile, the brothers of the late emperor compelled to undergo ordination and to administer the Eucharist as a public sign of their incapacitation for secular business.

Irene
Empress

The crafty Irene dissembled for a time her design for the restoration of images. Her ambitious mind (it is not uncommon in her sex) was deeply tinged by superstition; no doubt she thought that she secured the divine blessing, or rather that of the Virgin and the saints, upon her schemes of power, by the honour which she was preparing for their images. Fanaticism and policy took counsel together within her heart. But the clergy of Constantinople were too absolutely committed, as yet, on the other side; the army revered the memory, perhaps chiefly on that account the opinions, of Constantine Copronymus. The Patriarch, an aged and peaceful man, who had sincerely wished to escape the perilous charge of the episcopate, was neither disposed nor fitted to lend himself as an active instrument in such an enterprise. He was not absolutely indisposed to the image-worshippers; and when the empress allowed the laws to fall into disuse, and connived at the quiet restoration of some images, and encouraged the monks with signs of favour, it was bruited abroad that she acted in no discordance with the bishop's secret opinion. The public mind was duly prepared by prodigies in the remoter parts of the Empire for the coming revolution.

On a sudden the Patriarch Paul disappeared. It was
A.D. 783.
Tarasius
Patriarch. proclaimed that he had renounced his dignity, retreated into a cloister, and taken the habit of a monk. It cannot be known whether he had any secret understanding with the empress, but he who had been so solemnly and publicly pledged to the former emperor against the images would hardly, an old and unambitious man, take a strong part in their restoration. The empress visited his cloister and inquired the cause of his sudden retirement. From the first, said the

lowly patriarch, his mind had been ill at ease; that he had accepted a see rejected from the communion of great part of Christendom; should he die in this state of excommunication he would inevitably go to hell.^m The empress sent the chief persons of the court to hear this confession from the lips of the repentant patriarch. Paul deplored with bitter sorrow that he had concurred in the decrees against images; his mind was now awakened to truth; and he suggested, no doubt the suggestions of others, that nothing could heal the wounds of the afflicted Church but a general council to decide on image-worship. Having made this humiliating declaration he expired in peace.

On the succession to the see of Constantinople might depend the worship or the rejection of images throughout the East. Among all the clergy A.D. 784. Irene could find no one of influence, ability, and resolution equal to cope with the approaching crisis. The appointment of a monk would probably have been the signal for the rallying of the adverse party. Among her privy counsellorsⁿ was a man who in the world bore the character of profound religion, and of whose ability and ambition Irene had formed a high, and, as events proved, a just estimate. The empress assembled the people; she declared her respect for the memory of Paul; she asserted that she would not have allowed him to abandon his higher duties for monastic seclusion, but God had now withdrawn him from the scene, and it was necessary to appoint a successor of known capacity and

^m The Empress states this in the imperial letter read at the opening of the Council of Nicæa:—τὸ ἀνάρθεμα ἔξω ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας, ὃ ἀπάγει εἰς τὸ σκοτὸς τὸ ἐξώτερον, τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ.—P. 52.

ⁿ ἀσκηρητις—the Grecised Iatinitism.

holiness. The affair had been well organised; a general acclamation demanded Tarasius; to the demand the empress assented with undisguised satisfaction. Tarasius gave a good omen of his future conduct by the address with which he seemed to decline the arduous honour, on account of the controversies which distracted the Church. In a well-acted scene the empress employed persuasion, influence, authority, to win the reluctant patriarch. Tarasius played admirably the part of humble refusal, of concession, of capitulation on his own terms. The condition of his acceptance was the summoning a council to decide the great question of image-worship, which he declared to have been decreed by the sole authority of the emperor Leo, and to that authority the Council of Constantinople had only yielded its assent. Most of the people gave, at least seemingly, their cordial concurrence in the election, though even the admirers of Tarasius admit that there was much secret murmuring, and some open clamour among the lower populace.

Tarasius immediately took measures to consolidate the whole strength of the party. Messengers were sent to Rome to obtain the presence of the pope (Hadrian) in person or by his legates. Hadrian made some show of remonstrance against the sudden promotion of a layman to so important a see, but acquiesced in it, as demanded by the emergencies of the times. The patriarchs of Alexandria and of Antioch and of Jerusalem were summoned, and certain ecclesiastics appeared as representatives of those prelates.

The Council met in Constantinople; but with the
A.D. 785. army and a large part of the populace of Constantinople image-worship had lost its power. The soldiery, attached to the memory and tenets of

Constantine Copronymus, broke into the assembly, and dispersed the affrighted monks and bishops. The empress in vain exerted herself to maintain order. No one was hurt; but it was manifest that no council of image-worshippers was safe in the capital.

Nicæa was chosen for the session of the council, no doubt on account of the reverence which attached to that city, hallowed by the sittings of the first great council of Christendom. Decrees issued from Nicæa would possess peculiar force and authority; this smaller city, too, could be occupied by troops, on whom the empress could depend, and in the mean time Irene managed to disband the more unruly soldiery. Thus, while the Bulgarians menaced one frontier and the Saracens another, she sacrificed the safety of the Empire, by the dissolution of her best army, to the success of her religious designs.

The council met at Nicæa. The number of ecclesiastics is variously stated from 330 to 387.

Among these were at least 130 monks or abbots, besides many bishops, who had been expelled as monks from their sees, and were now restored. Tarasius took the lead as virtual, if not acknowledged, president of the assembly. The first act of the Council of Nicæa showed the degree of dispassionate fairness with which the inquiry was about to be conducted. After the imperial letters of convocation had been read, three bishops appeared, Basilus of Ancyra, Theodosius of Myra in Lycia, Theodosius of Amorrium; they humbly entreated permission to recant their errors, to be reconciled to the Catholic Church. They recited a creed framed with great care, and no doubt of pre-arranged orthodoxy, in which they repudiated the so-called Council of Constantinople, as a synod of fools and mad-

Second council of Nicæa.

A.D. 787.

men, who had dared to violate the established discipline of the Church, and impiously reviled the holy images. They showered their anathemas on all the acts, on all the words, on all the persons engaged in that unhal-
lowed assembly.^o

The council received this humble confession of their sin and misery with undisguised joy; and Tarasius pronounced the solemn absolution. Certain other prelates were then admitted, among them the Bishops of Nicæa and Rhodes. They were received after more strict examination, and citation of ecclesiastical precedents, from which it appeared that Bishops who recanted Arianism and Nestorianism, having been re-admitted into the Church, even Iconoclasts should not be rejected from her bosom on the same terms.^p The severer monks made vigorous resistance to these acts of lenity, but were overruled at length. It was debated to what class of heretics the Iconoclasts were to be ascribed. The patriarch proposed only to confound them with the most odious of all, the Manicheans and the Montanists.^q The inexorable leader of the monkish party asserted that it was worse than the worst heresy, being absolute renegation of Christ.^r This was among the preliminary acts of a council, assembled to deliberate, examine,

^o They denounced the prelates who presided in the assembly; among the rest Basil of Pisidia, on whom they inflicted an ecclesiastical nickname. He was fitly named (*κακεμφάτως*) *τρίκακκος*, or *τρίκακος*.

^p It is worthy of remark that they accuse the Council of Constantinople of asserting the sole authority of Scripture, the insufficiency of Tradition without it: *ὡς εἰ μὴ ἐκ τῆς παλαιᾶς καὶ καινῆς διαθήκης ἀσφαλῶς*

διδασθῶμεν, οὐ ἐπόμειθα ταῖς διδασκαλίαις τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων. They brand this doctrine as that of Arius, Nestorius, and other heretics.

^q The usual difficulty arose as to ordinations conferred or received by such heterodox bishops.

^r *ἡ αἵρεσις αὕτη χεῖρον παντῶν τῶν αἵρέσεων κακόν· οὐαὶ τοῖς εἰκονομάχοις, καὶ (κακῶν κακίστη) ὡς τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἀνατρέπονται.*—P. 78.

discuss, and then decide this profound theological question.

The whole proceedings of the council, though conducted with orderly gravity, are marked with the same pre-determinate character, the same haughty and condemnatory tone towards the adversaries of image-worship. The fathers of Nicæa impaired a doubtful cause by the monstrous fables which they adduced, the preposterous arguments which they used, their unmeasured invectives against their antagonists. The Pope Hadrian, in his public letter, related a wild and recent legend of a vision of Constantine the Great, in which St. Paul and St. Peter appeared to him, and whom he knew to be the apostles by their resemblance to pictures of them, exhibited to him by Pope Silvester.^s It is the standing argument against the Iconoclasts: "the Jews and Samaritans reject images, therefore, all who reject them are as Jews and Samaritans."^t The ordinary appellations of the Iconoclast comprehend every black shade of heresy, impiety, atheism.

The rapidity with which the council executed its work was facilitated by the unanimity of its decisions.^u The whole assembly of bishops and monks subscribed the creed, in which, after assenting to the decrees of the first six councils, and to the anathemas against the heretics denounced therein, they passed, acting, as they declared, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the following canon.

"With the venerable and life-giving cross shall be set up the venerable and holy images, whether in colours, in mosaic work, or any other material, within the con-

Labbe, Concil., p. 111.

^s Ib., p. 358.

^u There were eight sittings between the 24th Sept. and 23rd Oct.—Walch, 530.

Decree on
image-wor-
ship. secrated churches of God, on the sacred vessels and vestments, on the walls and on tablets, on houses and in highways. The images, that is to say, of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ; of the immaculate Mother of God; of the honoured angels; of all saints and holy men. These images shall be treated as holy memorials, worshipped, kissed, only without that peculiar adoration* which is reserved for the Invisible, Incomprehensible God." All who shall violate this, as is asserted, immemorial tradition of the Church, and endeavour, forcibly or by craft, to remove any images, if ecclesiastics, are to be deposed and excommunicated, if monks or laymen, excommunicated.

The council was not content with this formal and solemn subscription. With one voice they broke out into a long acclamation, "We all believe, we all assent, we all subscribe. This is the faith of the apostles, this is the faith of the Church, this is the faith of the orthodox, this is the faith of all the world. We, who adore the Trinity, worship images. Whoever does not the like, anathema upon him! Anathema on all who call images idols! Anathema on all who communicate with them who do not worship images! Anathema upon Theodorus, falsely called Bishop of Ephesus; against Sisinnius of Perga, against Basilius with the ill-omened name! Anathema against the new Arius Nestorius and Dioscorus, Anastasius; against Constantine and Nicetas! (the Iconoclast Patriarchs of Constantinople). Everlasting glory to the orthodox Germanus, to John of Damascus! To Gregory of Rome everlasting glory! Everlasting glory to the preachers of truth!"

Our history pauses to inquire what incidental notices

* We have no word to distinguish between *προσκύνησις* and *λατρεία*.

of the objects and the state of Christian art transpire during this controversy, more especially in the proceedings of the Council of Nicæa. There seem to have been four kinds of images against which the hostility of their adversaries was directed, and which were defended by the resolute attachment of their worshippers. I. Images, properly so called, which were thrown from their pedestals, and broken in pieces. II. Mosaic paintings, which were picked out. III. Paintings on waxen tablets on the walls, which were smoked and effaced. IV. Paintings on wood, which were burned. There were likewise carvings on the sacred vessels; and books were destroyed on account of the pictures with which they were embellished.⁷

In all the images and paintings there was, as formerly observed, a reverential repugnance to attempt any representation of God the Father. The impiety of this was universally admitted; the image-worshippers protest against it in apparent sincerity, and not as exculpating themselves from any such charge by their adversaries.

The first and most sacred object of art was the Saviour, and next to the Saviour the "Mother of God." The propriety of substituting the actual human form of the Saviour for the symbolic Lamb,² or the Good Shepherd, was now publicly and authoritatively asserted. Among the images of various forms and materials some are mentioned of silver and of gold. A certain Philastrius objected to the Holy Ghost being figured in the form of a dove.³

⁷ Passim, especially address to the Emperor at the close of the Council.
—P. 580.

² P. 123. See curious extract from.

the Journeying of the Twelve Apostles; a Docetic book, and so ruled to be by the Council.

³ P. 370.

A question of the form under which angels and arch-angels should be represented could not but arise. The fitness of the human form was unhesitatingly asserted; and angels were declared to have a certain corporeity, more thin and impalpable than the grosser body of man, but still not absolute spirit. Severus objected to angels in purple robes: they should be white, no doubt as representing light.^b

The whole of the New Testament is said to have been represented; meaning, no doubt, all the main facts of the history.^c Among the subjects in the Old Testament, as early as Gregory of Nyssa, a picture is described of the sacrifice of Isaac, in which there must have been an attempt at least at strong expression.^d Chrysostom is cited for a picture on the sublime but difficult subject of the angel destroying the army of Sennacherib. Images of Moses, of Elijah, of Isaiah, and of Zechariah, are named. Pope Hadrian asserts (but there has been already ground to question his assertion), that Constantine built a church in Rome, in which was painted on one side Adam expelled from paradise, on the other, the penitent thief ascending into it. In Alexandria there was an early painting of the Saviour between the Virgin and John the Baptist.

There is nothing, or hardly anything, to induce the supposition that any one image or painting was distinguished as a work of art; as impressing the minds of its worshippers with admiration of its peculiar grace, majesty, or resemblance to actual life. Art, as art, entered not into the controversy. It was the religious feeling which gave its power to the image or painting, not the happy design, or noble execution, which

^b P. 373.^c P. 38^d P. 360.

awakened or deepened the religious feeling. The only exception to this is the description of the picture representing the martyrdom of St. Euphemia, by Asterius Bishop of Amasia. This was painted on linen.*

Among the acclamations and the anathemas which closed the Second Council of Nicæa, echoed loud salutations and prayers for the peace and blessedness of the new Constantine and the new Helena. A few years passed, and that Constantine was blinded, if not put to death, by his unnatural mother, whom religious faction had raised into a model of Christian virtue and devotion.

A long struggle took place, when Constantine reached the age of manhood, between the mother, Irene and eager to retain her power, and the son, to Constantine her son. assume his rightful authority. All the common arts of intrigue and party manœuvre were exhausted before they came to open hostilities. The principal courtiers, and part of the army, ranged themselves in opposite factions. Irene, anticipating, it was said, her adversaries, struck the first blow, seized, scourged, shaved into ecclesiastics, and imprisoned the chief of her son's adherents. A considerable part of the troops swore solemnly that the son should not reign during the lifetime of Irene; the son was given over to her absolute power, and chastised like a refractory school-boy. The next year a division of the army revolted, and proclaimed Constantine sole Emperor. The usual fate of the scourge and the tonsure befel the leaders of Irene's faction. The Empress was confined to her palace. But her inexhaustible fertility in intrigue soon restored her power. Constantine, having suffered a shameful defeat

by the Bulgarians, through her advice wreaked his vengeance on his uncles, whom he accused of aspiring to the throne; they were blinded, or mutilated by the loss of their tongues. Five years afterwards, on the very same day of the month (a less superstitious age might have beheld in this coincidence the retributive hand of God), Constantine was blinded by his mother.

These five years were years of base intrigue, treachery, outward courtesy and even the familiar intercourse of close kindred, of inward hatred, jealousy, and attempts to mine and countermine each the interest of the other. It was attributed to his mother's advice, with the design of heightening his unpopularity, that Constantine divorced himself from his wife Maria, forced her to retire into a convent, and married a woman of her bed-chamber, named Theodota. The rigid monks were furious at the weakness of the Patriarch Tarasius, who had sanctioned the reception of the divorced empress in a monastery. Plato, the most intolerant, and therefore most distinguished of them, withdrew from communion with the Patriarch. The indignant Emperor imprisoned some, and banished others of the more refractory monks to Thessalonica. This at once threw the whole powerful monastic faction into the interests of the Empress, who openly espoused their cause. The Armenian guards, who had now assumed something like the power, insolence, and versatility of the old Prætorian troops, were alienated by the severity of Constantine. Irene wound her toils with consummate skill around her ill-fated victim. There was treachery in his army, in his court, in his palace. He was bitterly afflicted by the loss of his eldest son. At length the plot was ripe; he knew it, and attempted in vain to make his escape to the East. Either fearing or pretending to fear, lest he

should regain his liberty, Irene sent to her secret emissaries around his person, and threatened to betray their treachery if they did not deliver up their master to her hands. Constantine was seized on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, conducted to the porphyry chamber, in which Irene had borne him—her first-born son. In that very chamber the crime was perpetrated. His eyes were put out, so cruelly and so incurably, as to threaten his death.^f In the East, the conduct of the unnatural mother was seen with unmitigated horror. An eclipse of the sun, accompanied with such darkness, that ships wandered from their courses, was held to be a sign of the sympathy of the heavenly orbs with the suffering Emperor—an expression of divine disapprobation. Among the few instances in the annals of mankind, in which ambition and the love of sway have quenched the maternal feeling—that strongest and purest impulse of human nature—is the crime committed against her son by the Empress Irene. But it is even more awful and humiliating that (so inextinguishable are religious passions!) a churchman of profound learning, of unimpeachable character, should, many centuries after, be so bewildered by zeal for the *orthodox* Empress, as to palliate, extenuate, as far as possible apologise for this appalling deed, in which the sounder moral sense of the old Grecian tragedy would have imagined a divine Nemesis for the accumulated guilt of generations of impious ancestors.^g

Murder of
Constantine.

A.D. 797.

^f δεινῶς καὶ ἀνιδρώς πρὸς τὸ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτόν.—Theophan., p. 732.

^g The passage must be quoted:—“Scelus planè execrandum, nisi quod multi excusant, justitiæ eam zelus ad id faciendum excitasset, quo nomine

eadem post hæc meruit commendari. At non fuit matris jussio, ut ista pateretur, sed ut teneretur,” (this is directly contrary to Theophanes and the best authorities), “nec amplius imperaret, tanquam si e manu furiorum

So completely indeed might the Iconoclastic faction appear to be crushed, that neither during the strife between the mother and the son, though it might have some latent influence, did it give any manifest or threatening sign of its existence; and Irene
A.D. 797-802. reigned in peace for five years, and was overthrown by a revolution, in which religion had no apparent concern.

The controversy slept during the reign of Nicephorus, and that of Michael, surnamed Rhangabes.
Nicephorus emperor. A.D. 802-811. The monks throughout this period seem to form an independent power (a power no doubt arising out of, and maintained by, their championship of image-worship), and to dictate to the Emperor, and even to the Church. On the other hand, among the soldiery are heard some deep but suppressed murmurs of attachment to the memory of Constantine Copronymus.
Michael. A.D. 811-813.

Leo the Armenian ascended the throne, for which Michael Rhangabes felt and acknowledged his incapacity. The weak Michael had courted the friendship of the monks; on his invitation, or with his acquiescence, they settled in increasing swarms

gladium auferret. Docuit Christus verbis suis summæ pietatis genus esse in hoc adversus filium esse crudelem, ipso dicente." (The cardinal here cites our Lord's words, Matt. x. 37, "He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.") "Quum jam olim, Dei præcepto, justæ sint armatæ manus parentum in filios, abeunt post Deos alienos, illisque necatis, qui hoc fecerint, Moysis ore laudati, ita dicentis, Exod. xxxii. 29. Plurimum interest quo quis aliquid animo agat. Si enim regnandi cupi-

dine Irene in filium molita esset insidias, detestabilior Agrippina matre Neronis fuisset Contra vero quod ista, *religionis causâ*, amore justitiæ in filium perpetrata credantur, ab Orientalibus nonnullis, qui facto aderant, *viris sanctissimis*! eadem posthæc præconio meruit celebrari." As if any motive could be assigned but the most unscrupulous ambition; though doubtless she was throughout supported by the image-worshippers.—Baron. Ann. sub ann. DCCXCVI.

within the city. The Armenian was another of those rude soldiers, born in a less civilised part of Christendom, in which image-worship had not taken profound root. But he did not betray his repugnance to the popular religious feeling until, like his predecessor the Isaurian Leo, he had secured the north-western and eastern frontiers of the empire. Against the Bulgarians, who were actually besieging Constantinople, he began the war by a base act of treachery, an attempt to assassinate Cromnus, their victorious king, during a peaceful interview ; he terminated it by a splendid victory, which for a time crushed the power of these Barbarians. He was equally successful against the Saracens. The firm and prosperous administration of Leo extorted from the exiled Patriarch of Constantinople, Nicephorus, an ample if unwilling acknowledgment. "Impious as he was, he was a wise guardian of the public interests. Firm in civil as in military affairs, superior to wealth, he chose his ministers for their worth, not their riches, and aimed at least at the rigid execution of justice."^h

But all these virtues were obscured, in the sight of the image-worshippers, by his attempt to suppress that worship. Even on his accession there was some mistrust of his opinions ; the name Chameleon can scarcely apply to anything but his suspected religious versatility. The Patriarch at that time tendered him a profession of faith, which he adroitly put by till he should have despatched the more pressing duties of his station. He seemed, however, as he passed the brazen gate, to do homage to an image of the Saviour placed above it.

The enemies of Leo attribute his change to the artifices of a monk, by some strange contradiction a hater

^h Theophan. Contin., p. 30.

of images. The superstitious Leo was addicted to the consultation of self-asserted diviners; he had been designated by this monk, endowed as was supposed with the prophetic gift, for the throne. As the witch of Endor Saul, so the monk had recognised the future monarch, though shrouded in disguise. At the same time, he was threatened with immediate death if he did not follow the course of Leo the Isaurian; if he did, the empire was to remain in his family for generations.

The emperor summoned the Patriarch Nicephorus to his presence before the Senate, and proposed the insidious question, whether there were not those who denied the lawfulness of worship to images? The Patriarch was not scrupulous in his reply. He appealed to the holy Veronica, the napkin with the impression of the Saviour's face, the first sacred image not made with hands. He declared that there were images made by the apostles themselves, of the Saviour and the Mother of God; that there was actually in Rome a picture of the transfiguration, painted by the order of St. Peter; he did not forget the statue at Paneas, in Palestine.ⁱ Another bishop boldly admonished the emperor to attend to his proper business, the army, and not to venture to meddle with the affairs of the Church, in which he had no concern. The indignant emperor banished the two intractable prelates. Euthymius, of Sardis, who had used still more opprobrious language, was corporally punished with blows and stripes. As Irene had promoted Tarasius, so Leo raised an officer of his household, Theodotus Cassiteras, to the patriarchal throne. Image-worship was again proscribed by an imperial edict. The worshippers are

Against
image-wor-
ship.

said to have been ruthlessly persecuted ; and Leo, according to the phraseology of the day, is accused of showing all the blood-thirstiness, without the generosity, of the lion. Yet no violent popular tumult took place ; nor does the conspiracy which afterwards cut short the days of Leo the Armenian appear to have been connected with the strife of religious factions. He might have escaped his fate but for his scrupulous reverence for the institutions of the Church. Michael the Stammerer had risen, like Leo, to military distinction. He was guilty, or at least suspected, of traitorous designs against the emperor, thrown into prison, and condemned to immediate death. But the next day (the day appointed for his execution) was the feast of the nativity of Christ. The wife of Leo urged him not to profane that sacred season, that season of peace and good-will, by a public execution. Leo, with a sad prophetic spirit, answered that she and her children would bitterly rue the delay ; but he could not withstand her scruples and his own. Yet his mind misgave him : at midnight the emperor stole into the dungeon, to assure himself that all was safe. The prisoner was sleeping quietly ; but a slave, who had hid himself under the bed, recognised the purple sandals of the emperor. Michael instantly sent word to the other conspirators, that unless they struck the blow he would denounce them as his accomplices. The chamberlain of Leo was Michael's kinsman ; and on the dawn of the holy day, which Leo had feared to violate, the conspirators mingled with the clergy, who assembled as usual, at the third watch, to hail the birth of Christ. The emperor was famed for the finest voice in the city : he had joined in the beautiful hymn of peace, when the conspirators rushed to the attack. At first, in the fog of the morning, they mis-

took the leader of the clergy for the emperor, but fortunately he took off his cap and showed his tonsure. Leo, in the mean time, had taken refuge at the altar, seized the great cross, and with this unseemly weapon, grasped in his despair, kept his enemies at bay, till at length a gigantic soldier lifted his sword to strike. Leo reminded him of his oath of allegiance: "'Tis no time to speak of oaths," replied the soldier, "but of death;" and swearing by the divine grace,^k smote off the arm of his sovereign, which fell with the heavy cross; another struck off his head. Michael was crowned with the fetters of his captivity still on his legs.

Whatever hopes the clergy, at least the image-worshippers, or the monks, might have conceived at the murder of Leo, which they scrupled not to allege as a sign of the divine disfavour towards the Iconoclasts, were disappointed on the accession of Michael the Stammerer. The new emperor was a soldier more rude than the last; he could scarcely read. His birth was ascribed to a Phrygian village, chiefly inhabited by Jews; and he was said to have been educated in a strange creed, which was neither Judaism nor Christianity. He affected a coarse humour; he did not spare the archbishop, who returned without authority, but without rebuke, from his exile, and forced an interview with the emperor. Michael received and dismissed him with civil scorn. Rumours were circulated, that even on more sacred subjects he did not repress his impious sarcasms. His whole conduct seemed tinged with a kind of Sadducising Judaism. He favoured the

^k ἔτι τε κατὰ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως χάριτος. This, as a fact, or an embellishment of the historian, is equally characteristic.—Theoph. Contin., p. 39.

Jews in the exaction of tribute (perhaps he was guilty of the sin of treating them with justice), he fasted on the Jewish Sabbath, he doubted the resurrection of the dead, and the personality of the devil, as unauthorised by the religion of Moses.^m Image-worship he treated with contemptuous impartiality. He declared that he knew nothing of these ecclesiastical quarrels; that he would maintain the laws and enforce an equal toleration. To the petitions of the patriarch for the formal restoration to his see, he offered his consent if the patriarch would bury the whole question, alike the decrees of Constantinople and of Nicæa, in oblivion; and in a great public assembly (assembled for the purpose), he proclaimed the worship of images a matter altogether indifferent. Yet Michael is charged with departing from his own lofty rule of toleration. The calamities of his reign, the danger of the capital and of the whole empire from the invasion of the apostate Thomas, the loss of Crete and of other islands to the Saracens, were ascribed to the just vengeance of God for the persecutions of his reign.

But the worst crime of which Michael was guilty, in the sight of the image-worshippers, was the parentage and education of him whom the monkish writers call the new Belshazzar, Theophilus. Michael, in his aversion to the monastic faction, entrusted the education of his son to a man of high character, John the Grammarian, whom Theophilus in after life, having employed as his chief counsellor in civil affairs, as ambassador A.D. 829. in the most difficult negotiations, advanced at length to the see of Constantinople. Theophilus was an Oriental, his enemies no doubt said, a Mohammedan

^m Theophan. Contin., p. 49.

Sultan on the throne of the Roman Empire. Even his marriage, though to one wife, had something of the supercilious condescension of the lord of a hareem. The most beautiful maidens of the empire were assembled, in order that Theophilus might behold and choose his bride. Of these, Eucasia was the loveliest. Theophilus paused, and as he gazed on her beauty, in a strange moralising fit he said, with an obvious allusion to the fall, "Of how much evil hath woman been the cause!" The too ready or too devout Eucasia replied, with as evident reference to the Mother of God, "And of how much good!" Startled by her quickness and her theology, Theophilus passed on to the more gentle and modest Theodora. Eucasia retired to shroud her disappointment in a convent. The justice of Theophilus, somewhat ostentatiously displayed, was of that severe, capricious, but equitable character, which prevails where the law being part of the religion, the sovereign the hereditary head of the religion, his word is law. He was accessible to the complaints of his meanest subjects; as he passed on certain days to the church in the Blachernae, any one might personally present a petition, or demand redress. As he rode abroad, he would familiarly inquire the price of the cheapest commodities, and express his strong displeasure at what he thought exorbitant charges. One instance may show, as no doubt it did show to his subjects, the impartiality and capricious rigour of his judgements.ⁿ Petronas, the brother of the empress, had darkened by a lofty building the dwelling of a poor widow. Once she appealed

ⁿ One edict, attributed to Theophilus, may remind us of the Emperor Paul of Russia. Himself being inclined to baldness, he ordained that all his subjects should cut their hair short: to let it flow over the shoulders incurred a heavy penalty

to the emperor, but Petronas, secure as he supposed in his interest, disregarded the imperial command to redress the grievance. On her second complaint, this man, who had filled offices of dignity, was ignominiously, publicly, and cruelly scourged in the market-place. The haughty, rather Roman, contempt of Theophilus for commerce, appears in his commanding a vessel full of precious Syrian merchandise to be burned, though it belonged to the Empress Theodora, reproaching her with degrading the imperial dignity to the paltry gains of commerce.^o The revenues, which he had in some degree restored by economy or by better administration and increased perhaps by the despised commerce to Constantinople, he expended with Eastern magnificence. He sent a stately embassy to the caliph at Bagdad. John the Grammarian represented his sovereign, and was furnished with instructions and with presents intended to dazzle the Barbarian. Of two vessels of enormous cost, which he was to exhibit at a great feast, one was intentionally lost, that the ambassador might astonish the Saracen with his utter indifference, and produce with greater effect the second and far more splendid vase of silver, full of gold coins. A scene of gorgeous emulation took place. The caliph poured out his gold, which John affected to treat as so much dust; the caliph brought forth a hundred Christian captives, splendidly attired, and offered them to the ambassadors, who refused them till they could repay an equal number of Saracen captives. Yet all

Character of
Theophilus.

^o Gibbon (as Schlosser has observed) has exaggerated the cruel punishments of Theophilus. With Schlosser, I find no authority for, "The principal ministers, for some venial offences, for some defect of equity or vigilance, a præfect, a quæstor, a captain of the guard, were banished or mutilated, or scalded with burning pitch, or burned in the Hippodrome."

this rivalship with the Hagarene, as he is contemptuously called by contemporary history, though it soon gave place to implacable hostility and uninterrupted war, would confirm with the image-worshippers the close alliance between Iconoclasm and Mohammedanism. Even in the other branch of expenditure in which Theophilus displayed his magnificence, the sumptuous buildings with which he adorned Constantinople (a palace built on the model of a Saracenic one, belonging to the caliph, in the same style, and same variety of structure and material), would display a sympathy in tastes, offensive to devout feeling.^p Though among his splendid edifices churches were not wanting, one especially, dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, called Tricinatus, from its triple apse.

A character like that of Theophilus, stern and arbitrary even in his virtues, determined in his resolutions, and void of compassion against those who offended against his justice, that is his will, was not likely, when he declared himself an Iconoclast, to conduct a religious persecution without extreme rigour. He was a man of far higher education than the former image-breaking emperors, and saw no doubt more clearly the real grounds of the controversy. Theophilus wrote poetry, if the miserable iambics with which he wished to brand the faces of some of his victims may be so called. He

^p John the Grammarian, on his return from Syria, persuaded the Emperor τὰ τοῦ Βρύου ἀνάκτορα πρὸς τὴν τῶν Σαρακηνῶν κατασκευασθῆναι ὁμοίωσιν. ἐν τε σχήμασι καὶ ποικιλίᾳ μὴδὲν ἐκείνων τὸ σύνολον παραλλάττοντα. — Theophan. Contin., p. 98. Symeon Magister assigns a different period to this palace,

which he embellishes with the Eastern luxury of *παράδεισοι*, and tanks of water. This, however, shows that already there was a peculiar Saracenic style of building, new to the Romans, and introduced into Constantinople. The fact is not unworthy of notice in the history of architecture.

composed church music; some of his hymns were admitted into the church service, in which the emperor himself led the choir.¹

Theophilus could not but perceive the failure, and disdain to imitate his father's temporising policy, who endeavoured to tolerate the monks, while he discouraged image-worship.² He avowed his determination to extirpate both at once. Leo the Armenian and Michael the Stammerer had attempted to restrict the honours paid to images; Theophilus prohibited the making new ones, and ordered that in every church they should be effaced, and the walls covered with pictures of birds and beasts. The sacred vessels, adorned with figures, were profaned by unhallowed hands, sold in the public markets, and melted for their metal. The prisons were full of painters, of monks and ecclesiastics of all orders. The monks, driven from their convents, fled to desert places; some perished of cold and hunger, some threw off the proscribed dress, yet retained the sacred character and habits; others seized the opportunity of returning to the pleasures as to the dress of the world.

Yet in the mass or the monastic faction the fanaticism of the emperor was encountered by a fanaticism of resistance, sometimes silent, sullen and stubborn, sometimes glorying in provoking the wrath of the persecutor. One whole brotherhood, that of the Abrahamites, presented themselves before the emperor. They

¹ οὐ παρητήσατο τὸ χειρονομεῖν, leading them it should seem by the motion of his hand. The clergy appear to have made the emperor pay for the privilege of indulging his tastes. δὸς τῷ κλήρῳ αὐτῆς λίτρας ὑπὲρ τούτου χρυσοῦ ἑκατὸν.—Theophan. Contin.. p. 107.

² Theophilus caused to be constructed two organs, entirely of gold, set with precious stones; and a tree of gold, on which sate birds which sang by a mechanical contrivance, the air being conveyed by hidden pipes.—Symeon Magister, p. 627.

asserted on the evidence, as they said, of the most ancient fathers,^s that image-worship dated from the times of the apostles; they appealed to the pictures of the Saviour by St. Luke, and to the holy Veronica. Irritated by their obstinacy, and not likely to be convinced by such arguments, the emperor drove them with insults and severe chastisements from the city. They took refuge in a church, on an island in the Euxine, dedicated to John the Baptist *the awful*.^t There they are said to have suffered martyrdom. Another stubborn monk, the emperor, in a more merciful mood, sent to his learned minister, John the Grammarian. The monk, according to the historian, reduced the minister to silence: if discomfited, the Grammarian bore his defeat with equanimity, the successful controversialist was allowed to retire and wait for better times in a monastery.

There was another monk, however, named Lazarus, a distinguished painter, whom the emperor could induce by no persuasion to abandon his idolatrous art. As milder measures failed, Lazarus was cruelly scourged and imprisoned. He still persisted in exercising his forbidden skill, and hot iron plates were placed on his guilty hands. The illness of the empress saved his life; he too took refuge in the church of the Baptist, where, having recovered the use of his hands, he painted "that fearful harbinger of the Lord," and on the restoration of images, a celebrated picture of the Saviour over the gate Chalce.

Two others, Theophilus, and his brother Theodorus, for presuming to overpower the emperor in argument,

^s Dionysius (the pseudo Dionysius), Hierotheus, and Irenæus.

^t τοῦ φοβεροῦ.

and to adduce a passage in the Prophet Isaiah, not, as the emperor declared, in his copy, suffered a more cruel punishment. Their faces were branded with some wretched iambic verses, composed by the emperor; they were then banished; one died, the other survived to see the triumph of image-worship."

This religious war seems to have been waged by the emperor on one side, and the monks on the other, with no disturbance of the general peace of the Empire. No popular tumults demanded the interference of the government. The people, weary or indifferent, submitted in apathy to the alternate destruction and restoration of images. But for the fatal passion of Theophilus for war against the Saracens, in which, with great personal valour, but no less military incapacity, he was in general unsuccessful, he might have maintained the Empire during all the later years of his reign in wealth and prosperity.

The history of Iconoclasm has a remarkable uniformity. Another female in power, another restoration of images. After the death of Theodora empress. Theophilus his widow Theodora administered the empire, in the name of her youthful son Michael, called afterwards, the Drunkard. Theodora, like her own mother Theoctista, had always worshipped images in private. Twice the dangerous secret had been betrayed to the emperor that the females of his own family practised this forbidden idolatry. On one occasion the children prattled about the pretty toys which their grandmother kept in a chest and took out, kissing them herself and offering them to the children's respectful

^a All the historians (monks) relate and forged by the monks, is rather this strange story, but the passage in suspicious; as well as twelve iambic Isaiah favourable to image-worship, verses tattooed on their faces.

kisses. Another time a dwarf, kept as a buffoon in the palace, surprised the empress taking the images, which he called by the same undignified name, from under her pillow, and paying them every kind of homage. The empress received a severe rebuke; the dwarf was well flogged for his impertinent curiosity. Theodora learned caution, but brooded in secret over her tutelar images.

No sooner was Theophilus dead than the monks, no doubt in the secret of Theodora's concealed attachment to images, poured into Constantinople from all quarters. At this juncture the brave Manuel, the general who had more than once retrieved the defeats of Theophilus, once had actually rescued him from the hands of the Saracens, and who had been appointed under the will of the emperor one of the guardians of the empire, fell dangerously ill. The monks beset his bed side, working at once on his hopes of recovery and his fears of death. Manuel yielded, and threw the weight of his authority into the party of the image-worshippers. Theodora had before feared to cope with the strength of the opposite faction, so long dominant and in possession of many of the more important civil and military dignities. She now ventured to send an officer of the palace to command the patriarch, John the Grammarian, either to recant his Iconoclastic opinions, or to withdraw from Constantinople. The patriarch is accused of a paltry artifice. He opened a vein in the region of the stomach, and showed himself wounded and bleeding to the people. The rumour spread that the empress had attempted to assassinate the patriarch. But the fraud was detected, exposed, acknowledged. The abashed patriarch withdrew, unpitied and despised, into the suburbs. Methodius was raised to the dignity of the

patriarchate. The worshippers of images were in triumph.

But Theodora, still tenderly attached to the memory of her husband, demanded as the price of her inestimable services in the restoration of images, absolution for the sin of his Iconoclasm and his persecution of the image-worshippers. Methodius gravely replied, that the power of the clergy to grant absolution to the living was unbounded, but of those who had died in obstinate sin, they had no authority to cancel or to mitigate the damnation. Even her own friends suspected the empress of a pious lie when she asserted, and even swore, that her husband, in the agony of death, had expressed his bitter repentance, had ascribed all the calamities of his reign to his stubborn heresy, had actually entreated her to bring him the images, had passionately kissed them, and so rendered up his spirit to the ministering angels. The clergy, out of respect to the empress and zeal for their own object, did not question too closely the death-bed penitence of Theophilus; with one consent they pronounced his pardon before God, and gave a written sentence of his absolution to the empress.

All was now easy; the fanaticism of Iconoclasm was exhausted or rebuked. A solemn festival was appointed for the restoration of images. The whole clergy of Constantinople, and all who could flock in from the neighbourhood, met in and before the palace of the archbishop, and marched in procession with crosses, torches, and incense, to the church of St. Sophia. There they were met by the empress and her infant son Michael. They made the circuit of the church, with their burning torches, paying homage to every image and picture, which had been carefully

restored, never again to be effaced till the days of later, more terrible Iconoclasts, the Ottoman Turks.

The Greek Church from that time has celebrated the anniversary of this festival with loyal fidelity.* The successors of Methodius, particularly the learned Photius, were only zealous to consummate the work of his predecessors, and images have formed part of the recognised religious worship of the Eastern world.

* Methodius was Patriarch only four years.

CHAPTER IX.

Severance of Greek and Latin Christianity.

UP to the eighth century Rome had not been absolutely dissevered from the ancient and decrepit civilisation of the old Empire. After a short period of subjection to the Ostrogothic kingdom, by the Eighth century. conquest of Justinian she had sunk into a provincial city of the Eastern realm. In the eighth century she suddenly, as it were, burst the bonds of her connexion with the older state of things, disjoined herself for ever from the effete and hopeless East, and placed herself at the head of the rude as yet, and dimly descried and remote, but more promising and vigorous civilisation of the West. The Byzantine Empire became a separate world, Greek Christianity a separate religion. The West, after some struggle, created its own empire; its natives formed an independent system, either of warring or of confederate nations. Latin Christianity was the life, the principle of union, of all the West; its centre, papal Rome.

Mohammedanism — which was gradually encircling and isolating the Byzantine Empire from its outlying provinces, obtaining the naval superiority in the Mediterranean, and subjecting the islands to her sway; which, with the yet unconverted Bulgarians, fully occupied all the Eastern armies, and left the Emperor without power to protect or even keep in subjection the Exarchate and the Italian dependencies—was the re-

moter cause of the emancipation of the West. The Koran thus in some degree, by breaking off all correspondence with the East, contributed to deliver the Pope from a distant and arbitrary master, and to relieve him from that harassing rivalry with which the patriarch of Constantinople constantly renewed his pretensions to equality or to superiority; and so placed him alone in undisputed dignity at the head of Western Christendom. But the immediate cause of this disruption and final severance between the East and West was the Iconoclasm of the Eastern emperors. Other signs of estrangement might seem to forebode this inevitable revolution. The line of Justinian, the conqueror of Italy, after it had been deposed and had re-assumed the Empire in the person of the younger emperor of that name, was now extinct. Adventurer after adventurer had risen to power, and this continual revolution could not but weaken the attachment, especially of foreign subjects, who might think, or chose to think, succession and hereditary descent the only strong titles to their obedience. Rome and Italy must thus ignominiously acknowledge every rude or low-born soldier whom the rabble of Constantinople, the court, or more powerful army, might elevate to the throne.

The exarchal government from the first had only been powerful to tyrannise and feeble to protect. The Exarch was like the satrap of an old Eastern monarchy; and this was more and more sensibly felt throughout Italy. Without abandoning any of its imperious demands on the obedience, this rule was becoming less and less able to resist the growing power and enterprise of the Lombards, or even to preserve the peace of the Italian dependencies. The exarchate had still strength to levy tribute, and to enforce heavy tax-

Exarchs of
Ravenna.

ation, the produce of which was sent to Constantinople. It repaid these burthens but scantily by any of the defensive or conservative offices of government. During the pontificate of John VI., the Exarch Theophylact had only been protected from the resentment of his own soldiery by the interference of the pope. The most unambitious pontiff might wish to detach his country and his people from the falling fortunes of the Byzantine Empire. If he looked to Rome, its allegiance to the East was but of recent date, the conquest of Justinian ; if to his own position, he could not but know that the successor of St. Peter held a much higher place, both as to respect and authority, before he had sunk into a subject of Constantinople. Never till this period in the papal annals had a pope been summoned, like a meaner subject, to give an account of his spiritual proceedings in a foreign city ; nor had he been seized and hurried away, with insult and cruel ill usage, to Constantinople, and, like the unhappy Martin, left to perish in exile.

Whatever lingering loyalty, under these trying circumstances, might prevail in Italy, or in the mind of the pontiff, to the old Roman government—whatever repugnance to the yoke of Barbarians, which might seem the only alternative when they should cease to be the subjects of the Empire—these bonds of attachment were at once rudely broken when the emperor became an heresiarch ; not a speculative heresiarch on some abstract and mysterious doctrine, but the head of a heresy which struck at the root of the popular religion—of the daily worship of the people. In general estimation, an Iconoclastic Emperor almost ceased to be a Christian : his tenets were those of a Jew or a Mohammedan. In the East the emperor, from fear, from persuasion, or from conviction, obtained, at one time at

least, a formidable party in his favour, even among the clergy. But for the monks, images might have disappeared from the East. In the West, iconoclasm was met with universal aversion and hostility. The Italian mind had rivalled the Greek in the fertility with which it had fostered the growth of image-worship: it adhered to it with stronger pertinacity. The expressive symbol of the fourth century, and the suggestive picture, which was, in the time of Gregory the Great, to be the book of Scripture to the unlearned, had expanded into the fondest attachment to the images of saints and martyrs, the Virgin, and the Saviour. In this as in all the other great controversies, from good fortune, from sagacity, from sympathy with the popular feeling, its adherents would say from a higher guidance, the papacy took the popular and eventually successful side. The pope was again not the dictator, he was the representative of the religious mind of the age. One of the more recent popes, the timid John VII., a Greek by birth, might seem almost prophetically to have committed the papal see to the support of image-worship, and resistance to an iconoclastic emperor. In a chapel which he dedicated in honour of the Virgin, in the church of St. Peter, the walls were inlaid with the pictures of the holy fathers; and throughout Rome he lavishly adorned the churches with pictures and statues. Gregory II. had no doubt often worshipped in public before these works of his holy predecessor.

The character of Gregory II. does not warrant the belief that he had formed any deliberate plan of policy for the alienation of Italy from the Eastern Empire. He was actuated not by worldly but by religious passions—by zeal for images, not by any

Image wor-
ship in Italy.

John VII.

Gregory II.
A.D. 715-731.

splendid vision of the independence of Italy. For where indeed could be found the protecting, the organising, the administrative and ruling power which could replace the abrogated authority of the Empire. The papacy had not yet aspired to the attributes and functions of temporal sovereignty.

In Italy the Lombard kingdom in the north, with its kindred dukedoms of Benevento and Spoleto in the south, alone possessed the strength and vigour of settled government.^a Under the long and comparatively peaceful reign of Rotharis, it had enjoyed what appears almost fabulous prosperity: it had its code of laws. Liutprand now filled the throne, a prince of great ambition and enterprise. If the papacy had entered into a confederacy of interests with the Lombard kings, and contenting itself with spiritual power, by which it might have ruled almost uncontrolled over Barbarian monarchs, and with large ecclesiastical possessions without sovereign rights, Italy might again perhaps have been consolidated into a great kingdom. But this policy, which the papacy was too Roman to pursue with the Gothic kings, or which was repudiated as bringing a powerful temporal monarch in too close collision with the supreme pontiff, was even less likely to be adopted with the Lombards.^b Between the papal see and the Lombard sovereigns—indeed between the Lombards and the Italian clergy—there seems almost from first to last to have prevailed an implacable and inexplicable antipathy. Of all the

^a From 635 to 651. During all this period Catholic and Arian bishops presided over their separate congregations in most of the cities of Italy.—Le Beau, *Bas Empire*, lviii. 4.

^b Yet the Lombards had more than once defended the Pope against the

Exarch. — Epist. Olradi. Episcop. Mediol. ad Carol. M. de Translat. S. Augustin. Olrad says of Liutprand, that he was “protector et defensor fidelis Ecclesiarum Dei . . . Christianissimus fuit ac religionis amator.”

conquerors of Italy, these (according to more favourable historians) orderly and peaceful people are represented as the most irreclaimably savage. The taint of their original Arianism was indelible. No terms are too strong with the popes to express their detestation of the Lombards.

According to the course of events, as far as it can be traced in chronological order, Gregory remained wavering and confounded by these simultaneous but conflicting passions: his determination to resist an iconoclastic emperor, and his dread of the Lombard supremacy in Italy. Up to the tenth year of his pontificate he had been occupied by the more peaceful duties of his station. He had averted the aggressions of the Lombard dukes on the patrimony of St. Peter; he had commissioned

A.D. 719. Boniface to preach the Gospel in Germany; he had extended his paternal care over the churches in England. No doubt, even if his more formal epistles had not yet been delivered, he had expostulated with the emperor on the first appearances of his hostility to images^c repeatedly, frequently, if not by private letters, probably by other missives.

But the fatal edict came to Italy as to one of the provinces subject to the Emperor Leo. The
Iconoclastic edict. A.D. 727. Exarch Scholasticus commanded it to be published in the city of Ravenna. The people broke out in instant insurrection, declared their determination to renounce their allegiance rather than permit their churches to be despoiled of their holiest ornaments, attacked the soldiery, and maintained a desperate conflict for the mastery of the city.

^c On the first intelligence of the Emperor's open iconoclasm, the Pope sent everywhere letters, "*cavere se Christianos, quod orta fuisset impietas.*"—Vit. Greg. II.

Liutprand, the Lombard king, had been watching in eager expectation of this strife to expel the Exarch, and to add the whole Roman territory to his dominions. With a large force he sat down before Ravenna. Lombards take Ravenna. Though the garrison made a vigorous defence, Liutprand, by declaring himself a devout worshipper of images, won the populace to his party; Ravenna surrendered; the troops of Liutprand spread without resistance over the whole Pentapolis.

Gregory was alarmed, for if he hated the heretical emperor, he had no less dread and dislike of the conquering Lombard.^d The establishment of this odious sovereignty throughout Italy, which had been so long making its silent aggressions in the South, with a king of the unmeasured ambition and ability of Liutprand, was even more formidable to the pope than the effete tyranny of Constantinople.^e

Gregory first discerned, among her islands and marshes, the rising power of Venice, equally Venice. A.D. 727. jealous with himself of the extension of the Lombard power. There the exarch had taken refuge. At the instigation of Gregory a league was formed of the maritime forces of Venice, already of some importance, nominally with the exarch, really with the pope, and the whole Roman or Byzantine troops. Ravenna was retaken while Liutprand was at Pavia, Ravenna retaken. and before he could collect his army to relieve it.

Gregory was still outwardly a loyal subject of the

^d "Quia, peccato favente, Ravennatum civitas, quæ caput extat omnium, a *non dicendâ* gente Longobardorum capta est."—Greg. Epist. x.

^e The chronology is so uncertain,

that I have been constrained to follow sometimes one authority, sometimes another—Baronius, Pagi, Muratori—and so have endeavoured to trace the historical sequence of events.

emperor, but the breach was inevitable. Iconoclasm had now become fanaticism with Leo; and Gregory, whether his celebrated letters had yet been despatched or were only in preparation, was as resolute in his assertion of image-worship. Rumours spread, and were generally believed, that the Iconoclast had sent orders to seize or to murder the pope. Each successive officer who was sent to retrieve the imperial affairs was supposed to be charged with this impious mission. Leo, no doubt, would have scrupled as little as his predecessors to order the apprehension of the refractory prelate, and his transportation to Constantinople; nor if blood had been shed in resistance to his commands, would he have considered it an inexpressible crime.^f But the pope believed himself, or declared his belief, that he was menaced with secret assassination. Three persons are named—the Duke Basil, Jordan the Chartulary, and John surnamed Lurion—as meditating this crime, under the sanction first of Marinus, Duke of the city of Rome, afterwards of Paul, who was sent as Exarch to restore the imperial ascendancy. Two of these murderers were killed by the people; the third, Basil, turned monk to save his life.^g Paul the Exarch occupied Ravenna, which, with the Pentapolis, with Rome and Naples, were the only parts of Italy still in possession of the emperor, though Venice owned a doubtful allegiance. It was announced that the Exarch intended to march to Rome to depose the Pope, and at the same time measures were to be taken to destroy the images in the churches throughout Italy. The whole territory—Venice, the Pentapolis, Rome—at once rose up in

^f Comp. Muratori sub ann. | about these attempts at assassination.
DCCXXVII. | But the letters may have been written,
^g Gregory is silent in his letters | even if not delivered, before this date.

defence of the Pope. They declared that they would not recognise the commission of Paul; the Exarch's generals began to contemplate their separate independence. They were only prevented by the prudence of Gregory from proclaiming a new emperor, and sending him against Constantinople. The crafty Lombards again joined the popular cause. Exhilaratus, Duke of Naples, said to have plotted against the pope's life, was slain with his son. Ravenna was divided between the papal and imperial factions. The Exarch fell in the tumult. The Lombards were the gainers in all these commotions; they occupied all the strong places in the Exarchate and in the Pentapolis.

A new Exarch, the last Exarch of Ravenna, Eutychius, landed at Naples. He is likewise accused of designing to send a band of assassins to Rome, to murder, not only the Pope, but also the chief nobles of the city. But for the intervention of the Pope, they would have retaliated by sending assassins to kill the Exarch. A fearful state of Christian society when such acts, if not designed, were believed to be designed by both parties!

All Rome pledged itself by a solemn oath to live and die in defence of their Pontiff^h—the protector of the images in their churches. The Lombards were equally loud in their protestations of reverence for his person. The ban of excommunication was issued against the Exarch, the odious mutilator and destroyer of those holy memorials. Eutychius at first attempted to alienate the Lombards from the papal interest, but it now suited the politic Liutprand to adhere in the closest league to the rebellious Romans. Eutychius had not offered a

^h "Qui ex scriptis nefandam viri | bardi catenâ dei constrinxerunt cuncti
(Exarchi) delositatem despicientes una | mortem pro defensione Pontificia sus-
se quasi fratres Romani atque Longo- | tinere gloriosam."—Olradi, Eplst.

tempting price for his alliance. Some time after, coveting the independent dukedoms of Spoleto and Benevento, Liutprand entered into secret negotiations with the Exarch. The dukedoms by this treaty were to be the share of the Lombard king, Rome to be restored to its allegiance to the emperor. Liutprand having made

A.D. 729.

himself master of Spoleto, and thus partly gained his own ends, advanced to Rome, and encamped in the field of Nero.¹ The Pope, like his predecessors, went forth to overawe by his commanding sanctity this new Barbarian conqueror, who threatened the Holy City. It pleased Liutprand to be overawed; he was not too sincere in his design to restore the imperial authority in Rome. He played admirably the part of a pious son of the Church; his conduct, as doubtless he intended, contrasted no little to his advantage with that of the sacrilegious Iconoclast Leo. He cast himself

Liutprand
in Rome.

at the feet of the Pope, he put off his armour, and all his splendid dress, his girdle, his sword, his gauntlets, his royal mantle, his crown of gold, and a cross of silver, and offered them at the tomb of the Apostle. He entreated the Pope (his arguments were not likely to be ineffectual) to make peace with the Exarch. So completely did harmony appear to be restored, that the Pope and the Exarch united in suppressing an insurrection raised by a certain Petasius, who proclaimed himself emperor under the title of Tiberius III. The Exarch, with the aid of the Romans, seized the usurper, and sent his head to Constantinople. After this the Exarch probably retired to Ravenna, and must at least have suspended all active measures for the suppression of image-worship.

A.D. 730.

¹ Anastasius, Vit.

Throughout these transactions the Pope appears actually if not openly an independent potentate, leagu- ing with the allies or the enemies of the Empire, as might suit the exigencies of the time; yet the share of Gregory II. in the revolt of Italy has been exaggerated by those who boast of this glorious precedent and example for the assertion of the ecclesiastical power, by depriving an heretical subject of his authority over part of his realm, and striking the Imperial Head with the impartial thunders of excommunication; so also by those who charge him with the sin of rebellion against heaven-constituted monarchy. If, as is said, he proceeded to the hostile measure of forbidding the Italian subjects of Leo to pay their tribute; if by a direct ex- communication he either virtually or avowedly released the subjects of the Emperor from their allegiance^k (his own language in his letters by no means takes this haughty or unsubmissive tone), his object was not the emancipation of Italy, but the preservation of images, in which Gregory was as fanatically sincere as the hum- blest monk in his diocese.

No doubt a council was summoned and held at Rome by Gregory II., in which anathemas were launched against the destroyers of images. If, however, the emperor was by name excommunicated by the pope, this was not and could not be, as in later times with the kings and emperors of Western Europe, an absolute and total exclusion from Christian privi- leges and Christian rites. It was a disruption of all communion with the Bishop of Rome, and his orthodox Italian subjects.^m No doubt there was a latent assertion

^k Theophanes, iv. c. 5 (p. 621); after him by Glycas, Zonaras, Cedrenus. See likewise Anastasius.

^m Walch makes two sensible ob- servations; first, that the revolt of Italy and the extinction of the Em-

Nov. 730.
Council at
Rome.

that the Roman church was the one true church, and that beyond that church there was no salvation; but the Patriarch of Constantinople recognised no such power in the Roman pontiff, unless himself joined in the anathema; and Anastasius, the present patriarch, was now an ardent destroyer of images.ⁿ

Leo revenged himself by severing the Transadriatic provinces, the Illyrica, from the Roman patriarchate, and by confiscating the large estates of the see of Rome in Calabria and Sicily. He appears too to have chosen this unfortunate time for an increase in the taxation of those provinces. A new census was ordered with a view to a more productive capitation tax. The discontent at these exactions would no doubt strengthen the general resistance to the measures of Leo; and perhaps Gregory's prohibition of the payment to the imperial revenue may have been but resistance to these unprecedented burthens.

Such was the relation between the see of Rome and the Eastern Empire at the death of Gregory II.
 Buried Feb. 11, 731. His successor, Gregory III., was of Syrian birth.
 Gregory III. At the funeral of the deceased pope, the clergy and the whole people broke out into a sudden acclamation, and declared Gregory III. his successor. But he was not consecrated till the ensuing month. So far was this election from a deliberate renunciation of allegiance to the Empire, or an assertion of independence on the part of the Pope or the Roman people, that the confir-

archate was not complete till after the death of both Gregorys; secondly, that the excommunication of the Emperor by the Pope was not an exclusion from all spiritual privileges, but merely a refusal to communicate with him.

ⁿ In the reference to the council in the letter of Pope Hadrian to Charlemagne, p. 1460, he does not mention, though he does not exclude the notion of the excommunication of the Emperor. The council was held in Nov 730 Gregory died Feb. 731.

mation of the election by the Exarch at Ravenna was dutifully awaited before the Pope assumed his authority. Nor did Gregory III. break off or suspend his direct intercourse with the seat of government. His first act was a mission to Constantinople to announce his adherence to the doctrines of his predecessor on image-worship; and though his inflexible language was not likely to conciliate the Emperor, this mission and much of the subsequent conduct of Gregory show that the separation of Italy from the Empire was, at least, even if remotely contemplated, no avowed object of the papal policy. The first message was entrusted to George the Presbyter, but its language was so sternly and haughtily condemnatory of the emperor's religious proceedings, that the trembling ambassador had hardly begun his journey when he fled back to Rome and acknowledged that he had not courage for this dangerous mission. The Pope was so indignant at this want of sacerdotal daring, that he threatened to degrade the Presbyter, and was hardly persuaded to impose A.D. 732. a lighter penance. Once more George was ordered to set out for the court of Leo; he was arrested in Sicily, and not allowed to proceed. Gregory, finding his remonstrances vain or unheard, assumed a bolder attitude.

The council held by Gregory III. was formed with great care and solemnity. It was intended to be the declaration of defiance on the subject Nov. 1, 732. of images from all Italy. The archbishops of Grado and Ravenna, and ninety-three other prelates or presbyters of the apostolic see, with the deacons and the rest of the clergy, the consuls and the people of Rome, pronounced their decree that, whoever should overthrow, mutilate, profane, blaspheme the venerable images of

Christ our God and Lord, of the immaculate and glorious Virgin, of the blessed apostles and saints, was banished from all communion in the body and blood of Christ, and from the unity of the Church.

This solemn edict was sent to Constantinople by Constantine, the defender of the city. Constantine also was arrested in Sicily, his letters taken away, and, after an imprisonment of a year, he was allowed to return to Rome to report the bad success of his mission. Another address was sent in the name of the people of Italy, urging their attachment to the images, and imploring the emperor to annul his fatal statute. This, with two expostulatory letters from the pope, got not beyond Sicily. The messengers were seized by Sergius, the commander of the imperial troops, confined for eight months, sent back with every indignity to Rome, and menaced with the punishment of traitors and rebels if they should venture to land again in Sicily.

In Rome Gregory III. set the example of image-worship on the most splendid scale. He had obtained six pillars of precious marble from the Exarch at Ravenna, and arranged them in order with six others of equal value. These he overlaid with the purest silver, on which, on one side, were represented the Saviour and the apostles, on the other the Mother of God with the holy virgins. In an oratory of the same church he enshrined, in honour of the Saviour and the Virgin, reliques of the apostles, the martyrs, and saints of all the world. Among his other costly offerings was an image of the Holy Mother of God, having a diadem of gold and jewels, a golden collar with pendant gems, and earrings with six jacinths. In the Church of the Virgin was another image of the Mother, with the Divine Infant in her arms, adorned with pearls of great

weight and size. Many other of the churches in Rome and in the neighbourhood were decorated with images of proportionate splendour.

The Emperor, about this time, made his last desperate effort to retrieve his fortunes in Italy, to relieve the Exarch Eutychius, who was shut up in powerless inactivity in Ravenna, and to reduce the refractory pope, and Italy to obedience. A formidable armament was embarked on board a great fleet, Loss of Emperor's fleet. under the command of Manes, one of his bravest and most experienced generals. The fleet encountered a terrible storm in the Adriatic; great part of the ships was lost; and the image-worshippers on the coast of Calabria beheld their shores strewn with the wrecks of the Iconoclastic navy. Henceforth the Eastern Empire almost acquiesced in the loss of the exarchate. Eutychius maintained for a long time his perilous position in Ravenna, temporising between the pope, the Flight of the Exarch. Lombards, and the Franks. Nearly twenty years later he abandoned the seat of government, and took refuge in Naples.

Now, however, that the real power of the empire in Italy was extinguished, it might seem that nothing could resist the Lombards. Though King Liutprand and Gregory III., at least for the first eight years of Gregory's pontificate, maintained their outward amity, the Lombards, though not now Arian, were almost equally objects of secret abhorrence to the Catholic and the Roman. Italy must again become a Barbarian kingdom, the Pope the subject of a sovereign at his gates or within his city.

At this juncture the attention of Europe, of all Christendom, is centered upon the Franks. The great victory of Tours had raised Charles Martel to the rank

of the protector of the liberties of the religion of the Western world, from the all-conquering Mohammedans.

Charles
Martel.
A.D. 729.

It was almost the first,^o unquestionably the greatest defeat which that power had suffered, from the time that it advanced beyond the borders of Arabia, and having yet found no limits to its conquests in the East, had swept westward over Africa, Spain, and Southern Gaul, and seemed destined to envelope the whole world.

The Pope was thus compelled, invited, encouraged by every circumstance to look for protection, unless he submitted to the abhorred Lombard, beyond the Alps.^p The Franks alone of Barbarian nations had from the first been converted to orthodoxy, and adhered to it with unshaken fidelity. The Franks had dutifully listened to the papal recommendation of Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, had countenanced and assisted his holy designs for the conversion of the Teutonic tribes beyond the Rhine. Already had Gregory II. opened a communication with the Franks; already, before the dissolution of the Byzantine power, had secret negotiations begun to secure their aid against the Lombards.^q Eight or nine years of doubtful peace, at least of respectful mutual understanding, had intervened; when,

* The bloody defeat of Toulouse by Count Eudes led to no result.

^p Liutprand marched across the Alps but the year before in aid of Charles Martel against the Saracens, who had again appeared in formidable force in the South of France.

^q The authority for this important fact is Anastasius in his Life of Stephen III., who, in his dispute with King Astolph, "cernens præsertim, ab imperiali potentia nullum esse

subveniendi auxilium, tunc quemadmodum prædecessores ejus beatæ memoriæ dominus Gregorius et Gregorius alter, et dominus Zacharias, beatissimi pontifices Carolo excellentissimæ memoriæ, Regi Francorum direxerunt, petentes sibi subvenirî, propter impressiones ac invasiones quas et ipsi in hæc Romanorum provinciâ a nefandâ Longobardorum gente perpassi sînt." Charles Martel was not king.

almost on a sudden, the Lombards and the Pope are involved in open war, and Gregory III. throws himself boldly on the faith and loyalty of the mighty Frank. He sends the mystic keys of the Sepulchre of St. Peter and flings of his chains as gifts, which no Christian could resist; he offers the significant yet undefined title of Roman Consul. The letter of Gregory in the following year appeals in the most piteous tone to the commiseration and piety of the Barbarian. "His tears are falling day and night for the destitute state of the Church. The Lombard king and his son are ravaging by fire and sword the last remains of the property of the Church, which no longer suffices for the sustenance of the poor, or to provide lights for the daily service. They had invaded the territory of Rome and seized all his farms; his only hope was in the timely succour of the Frankish king." Gregory knew that the Lombards were negotiating with the Frank, and dexterously appeals to his pride. "The Lombards are perpetually speaking of him with contempt,—‘Let him come, this Charles, with his army of Franks; if he can, let him rescue you out of our hands.’ O unspeakable grief, that such sons so insulted should make no effort to defend their holy mother the Church! Not that St. Peter is unable to protect his successors, and to exact vengeance upon their oppressors; but the apostle is putting the faith of his followers to trial. Believe not the Lombard kings, that their only object is to punish their refractory subjects, the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento, whose only crime is that they will not join in the invasion and the plunder of the Roman see.

A.D. 739.

Gregory appeals to Charles Martel.

A.D. 740.

* In partibus Ravennatum.

* Fredegar. Contin. apud Bouquet, ii. 457.

Send, O my most Christian son! some faithful officer, who may report to you truly the condition of affairs here; who may behold with his own eyes the persecutions we are enduring, the humiliation of the Church, the desolation of our property, the sorrow of the pilgrims who frequent our shrines. Close not your ears against our supplications, lest St. Peter close against you the gates of heaven. I conjure you by the living and true God, and by the keys of St. Peter, not to prefer the alliance of the Lombards to the love of the great apostle, but hasten, hasten to our succour, that we may say with the prophet, 'The Lord hath heard us in the day of tribulation, the God of Jacob hath protected us.'"

The letter of Gregory III. seems rather like the cry of sudden distress than part of a deliberate scheme of policy. He is in an agony of terror at the formidable invasion of the Lombards, which threatens to absorb Rome in the kingdom of Liutprand. Succour from the East is hopeless; he turns to any quarter where he may find a powerful protector, and that one protector is Charles Martel. From the Lombard king he had not much right to expect forbearance, for it is clear that he had encouraged the duke of Spoleto, the vassal, as the ambitious Liutprand asserted, of the Lombard kingdom, in rebellion against his master. Duke Thrasimund had fled for refuge to Rome; and from Rome he had gone forth, not unaided, to reconquer his dukedom. The troops of Liutprand had overrun the Roman territory; they were wasting the estates of the Church. Liutprand had severed four cities, Amelia, Orta, Polymartia, and Blera, from the Roman territory.^t Some expressions

^t Ab eodem rege ablatae sunt e Ducatu Romano quatuor civitates.--
Anastasius.

in Gregory's second letter to Charles almost imply that he had entered Rome and plundered the Church of St. Peter.^a So nearly did Rome A.D. 741. become a Lombard city.

These acts of Gregory III. mark the period of transition from the old to the new political system of Europe. They proclaimed the severance of all connexion with the East. The Pope, as an independent potentate, is forming an alliance with a Transalpine sovereign for the liberation of Italy, and thus taking the lead in that total revolution in the great social system of Europe, the influence of which still survives in the relations between the Transalpine nations and Italy. The step to papal aggrandisement, The Pope a temporal power. though yet unpremeditated, is immense. Latin Christendom is forming into a separate realm, of which the Pope is the head. Henceforth the Pope, if not yet a temporal sovereign, is a temporal potentate.

Speculation may lead to no satisfactory result, but it is difficult not to speculate on the extent to which the Popes may have had more or less distinct conceptions as to the results of their own measures. Was their

^a Baronius drew this inference from the words of Gregory. Muratori contests the point, which is not very probable, and is not mentioned by Anastasius. Muratori explains the words "omnia enim lumina in honorem ipsius principis Apostolorum . . . ipsi abstulerunt. Unde et Ecclesia Sancti Petri denudata est, et in nimiam desolationem redacta," as relating to the devastation of the Church estates; "che servivano alla Luminaria d' essa Chiesa, ed al sovvenimento de' Poveri." But he has omitted the intermediate words, "et quæ a vestris parentibus, et a vobis oblata sunt." The lights or chandeliers, the oblations of former Frankish kings or of Charles, can scarcely be explained but of the actual ornaments of the Church. St. Peter's may have been plundered without the fall of the whole of Rome. The siege of Rome is mentioned among the military exploits of Liutprand in his epitaph. Compare Gregor. Epist. ii. ad Carol. Martel. Baronius and Muratori, sub ann. DCCXLI. Gretser published the two letters in his volume of the *Epistolæ Pontificum*.

alliance with the Franks beyond the Alps, even if at first the impulse of immediate necessity, and only to gain the protection of the nearest powerful rival to the hated Lombards, confined to that narrow aim? How soon began to dawn the vision of a spiritual kingdom over the whole West—the revival of a Western Empire beyond the Alps, now that the East had abandoned or lost its authority—or at least of some form of Roman government under which the title of consul or patrician should be borne by a Transalpine sovereign thus bound to protect Rome, while the real authority should rest with the Pope? Some ambiguous expressions in Gregory's epistle sound like an offer of sovereignty to Charles Martel. He sends him the keys of the tomb of St. Peter as a symbol of allegiance, and appears to acknowledge his royal supremacy.* The account of the solemn embassy which conveyed these supplicatory letters asserts that the Pope offered to the Frankish ruler the titles of Patrician and Consul of Rome, thus transferring, if not the sovereignty, the duty and honour of guarding the imperial city, the metropolis of Christendom, to a foreign ruler. According to another statement, he spoke not in his own name alone, but in that of the Roman people, who, having thrown off the dominion of the Eastern empire, placed themselves under the protection of his clemency.†

Charles Martel had received the first mission of Gregory III. with magnificence, yet not without hesitation. The Lombards used every effort to avert his interference in the affairs of Italy; and some gratitude

* "Per ipsas sacratissimas Claves Confessionis Beati Petri, quas vobis ad regnum direximus."—Greg. Epist. ii.

† Annales Metenses.

was due to Liutprand, who had rendered him powerful service (according to the Lombard's epitaph, he had fought in person for the cause of Christendom against the Saracens in Aquitaine²). But Charles returned a courteous answer, sent presents to Rome, and directed Grimon, abbot of Corbey, and Sigebert, a monk of St. Denys, to proceed with the ambassadors to the imperial city.

Not the least extraordinary part of this memorable transaction is the strangely discrepant character in which Charles Martel appeared to the Pope and to the clergy of his own country. While the Pope is offering him the sovereignty of Rome, and appealing to his piety, as the champion of the Church of St. Peter, he is condemned by the ecclesiastics beyond the Alps as the sacrilegious spoiler of the property of the Church; as a wicked tyrant who bestowed bishoprics on his counts and dukes, expelled his own relative, the rightful Archbishop of Rheims, and replaced him by a prelate who had only received the tonsure. A saint of undoubted authority beheld in a vision the ally of the popes, the designated Consul of Rome, the sovereign at whose feet were laid the keys of St. Peter's sepulchre, tormented in the lowest pit of hell. So completely had this view worked into the Christian mind, that Dante, the faithful recorder of popular Catholic tradition, adopts the condemnatory legend, and confirms the authority of the saint's vision.

² The lines relating to the siege of Rome (which the poet places first) end to this fact, run thus:—

³ Roma suas vires jam pridem milite multo Obsessa expavit, deinde tremuere feroces

Usque Saraceni, quos dispulit impiger
ipsos
Cum premerent Gallos, Karolo poscente
savari."

Note to Paul. Diacon. apud Muratori, c. lviii.

CHAPTER X.

Hierarchy of France.

THE origin of this hostility between Charles Martel and the hierarchy of France throws us back nearly a century, to the rise of the mayors of the palace, who had now long ruled over the pageant Merovingian kings, the do-nothing kings of that race; and to the enormous accumulation of wealth, territory, and power acquired by the bishops and monasteries of France. The state of this great Church, the first partly Teutonic Church, and its influence on the coming revolution in Latin Christianity and on the papal power, must justify the digression.

A.D. 637.

The kingly power of the race of Clovis expired with Dagobert I. In each of the kingdoms, when the realm was divided—above the throne, when it was one kingdom—rose the Mayor of the Palace, in whom was vested the whole kingly power. But the Franks now at least shared with the Romans the great hierarchical dignities: they were bishops, abbots. If they brought into the order secular ambition, ferocity, violence, feudal animosity, they brought also a vigour and energy of devotion, a rigour of asceticism, a sternness of monastic virtue. It was an age of saints: every city, every great monastery boasts, about this time, the tutelar patron of its church; legend is the only history; while at the same time fierce bishops surpass the fierce counts and barons in crime and bloodshed, and the holiest, most devout, most self-denying saints are ming-

ling in the furious contest or the most subtle intrigue. This Teutonising of the hierarchy was at once the consequence and the cause of the vast territorial possessions of the Church, and of the subsequent degradation and inevitable plunder of the Church. This was a new aristocracy, not as the Roman hierarchy had been, of influence and superior civilisation, but of birth, ability, ambition, mingled with ecclesiastical authority,^a and transcendent display of all which was esteemed in those times perfect and consummate Christianity. Nor were the bishops strong in their own strength alone. The peaceful passion for monachism had become a madness which seized on the most vigorous, sometimes the fiercest souls. Monasteries arose in all quarters, and gathered their tribute of wealth from all hands. The translation of the remains of St. Benedict to Fleury on the Loire was a national ovation. All ages, ranks, classes, races, crowded to the holy ceremony. Of the sons of Dagobert, Sigebert, who ruled in Austrasia, passed his life in peaceful works of piety. The only royal acts which he was permitted to perform were lavish donations to bishops and to monasteries.^b On the death of his brother, Clovis II. of Neustria,^c the widow Bathildis was raised to the regency in the name of her infant son, Clotaire III. Bathildis succeeded to some A.D. 656. part of the authority, to none of the crimes or ambition of Brunehaut or Fredegonde. She was a Saxon captive of exquisite beauty. Erthinwold, the Neustrian mayor of the palace, sacrificing his own honourable passion to

^a It is not easy to trace this slow and gradual Teutonising of the higher clergy. The names are not sure indications of birth: Romans sometimes barbarised their names.—Guizot, *Essai* V. iii. 2 ;

Hallam, Supplemental note, p. 75.

^b *Vita S. Sigeberti*, apud Bouquet, ii. He founded twelve monasteries.

^c Sigebert and Clovis died about the same time, 654, 655.

his ambition, married her to the king, Clovis II. Queen Bathildis was the holiest and most devout of women: her pious munificence knew no bounds; remembering her own bondage, she set apart vast sums for the redemption of captives. Not a cathedral, not a monastery, but records the splendid donations of Queen Bathildis: not farms or manses, but forests, districts, almost provinces.^d The high-born Frankish bishop, Leodegar (the St. Leger of later worship), had been raised by the sole power of Bathildis to the great Burgundian bishopric of Autun. Legend dwells with fond pertinacity on the holiness of the saint; sterner but more veracious history cannot but detect the ambitious and turbulent head of a great faction. There was a fierce and obstinate strife for the mayoralty; France must become a theocracy; the Bishop of Autun, if not in name, in power would alone possess that dignity. His rival Ebroin, the actual mayor, entered into internecine strife with the aspiring hierarchy: none but that hierarchy has handed down

^d "La trace de ses bienfaits se retrouve dans les archives de toutes les grandes abbayes de son temps. Luxeuil et d'autres monastères de Bourgogne en reçurent de grandes sommes et des terres. Dans le voisinage de Troyes, S. Frodoard obtint un vaste terrain marécageux nommé l'Isle Germanique, d'où il fit sortir la florissante abbaye de Moustier-la-belle. Curbion ou Moutier S. Lomer reçut la grande ville de Nogaret, plusieurs talents d'or et d'argent . . . elle accorde beaucoup de présents, une grande forêt, et des pâturages du domaine royal au fondateur de Jumièges, S. Filibert . . . Clotaire, sur les conseils de Bathilde, augmente les vastes domaines de Fontenelle . . . cité

modèle où quinze cent travailleurs étaient enrôlés avec neuf cent moines. Bathilde eut encore . . . sa part dans la munificence de Clovis II. et de Clotaire III. envers les monastères de Saint Denys en France, de Saint Vincent de Paris, de Fleury sur Loire, et de St. Maur de Fosses." St. Maur had the honour of possessing the bodies of St. Benedict and of St. Maur. —D. Pitra, Vie de St. Leger, p. 141. "Ainsi combla-t-elle de largesses les églises de S. Denys, et de S. Germain de Paris, de S. Médard de Soissons, de S. Pierre de Chartres, de S. Anian d'Orléans, de S. Martin de Tours." —P. 145. See, too, the donations of Dagobert II., p. 356.

the short dark annals of the time, and Ebroin has been chronicled as the most monstrously wicked of men. Under the rule of Ebroin, it was said by his authority, the Bishop of Paris was murdered for his pride; but Ebroin fell before the fiercer aggression of Leodegar the Burgundian bishop, who was supported by all the forces of Burgundy. It was held to be a splendid effort of Christian virtue that the saint spared the life of Ebroin. He was banished to the monastery of Luxeuil (the foundation of St. Columban), compelled to give up his wife, to submit to the tonsure, and to take the irrevocable vows. Leodegar ruled supreme, and in the highest episcopal splendour, in his cathedral city of Autun. If his poetical biographer is right, he assumed even the title of mayor of the palace.* But the haughty Neustrian nobility became weary of the rule of a woman and of bishops; Bathildis surrendered her power, and retired to her convent of Chelles.

By a sudden revolution the Bishop of Autun found himself an exile in the same monastery with his fallen rival, that of Luxeuil.^f The bishop had sternly condemned the marriage of the King Childeric (Austrasia and Neustria had become again one kingdom) with his cousin-german, Bilihildis. He was accused of a conspiracy against the life of the king. Affairs again wheeled round; Childeric was murdered; Ebroin and Leodegar, reconciled by their common misfortune, if not by their common religion, set forth together from their convent, ere long to strive with still fiercer animosity for the prize of power. Ebroin, the apostate, another

* "Quippe domus major penitus, rectorque creatus
Antistes meritis suscepit jura regenda
Aulæ post regem."

MS. printed by M. Pitra, 472.

^f See the pleasing description of Luxeuil—*Lucens ovile*, apud Pitra.

Julian, cast off his religion, that is, his monastic vows; his free locks again flowed; he returned to the embraces

of his wife.^g By common consent, Thierry III.,
A.D. 670. the youngest of the sons of Clovis II., brother of Clotaire and of Chilperic, who had been imprisoned in the abbey of St. Denys, if not tonsured, to incapacitate him for the throne, was brought forth to act the part of king. Ebroin aspired to and succeeded in wresting the mayoralty from Leudes, the rival set up by the Bishop of Autun.

No long time elapsed; the bishop is besieged in his cathedral city, and Autun boldly defies, under the command of her bishop, the kingly power, Ebroin ruling in the name of King Thierry III. Leodegar found it necessary to capitulate: he made his capitulation wear the appearance of lofty religious sacrifice; but he escaped not the revenge of Ebroin, who scrupled not to abuse his victory with the most atrocious barbarities against the holy person of the bishop. His eyes were pierced, his lips cloven, his tongue cut out. Two years after (he had taken refuge or had been consigned a prisoner to the abbey of Fecamp) he was cruelly put to death. He became a martyr as well as a saint in the annals of the Church—a martyr in the calm and majestic patience with which he submitted to his sufferings:—but a martyr to what Christian truth? To what but the power of the clergy, or to his own power, it is difficult to say.^h Ere long he became the most potent and

^g The poet naturally describes this enforced monachism as the unforgiven crime, which caused the insatiable vindictiveness of Ebroin:—

"*Illum propter, compulsus sum perdere
 crinem,
 Depulsus regno, monachalem sumere
 formam,*

*Conjugalis amplexus dulces et basia
 liqui,
 Oscula nec prolis collo suspensa tenebam.*"—*Pitra*, p. 477.

^h Compare (it is neither unamusing nor uninteresting) the *Vie de S. Leger*, par le R. P. Dom. J. B. Pitra, Paris, 1846. The author has ingeniously

popular saint of his prolific age; his reliques were disputed by cities, submitted to the ordeal of the divine judgement; distant churches boasted some limb of the holy martyr, his miracles were numberless, and even in the nineteenth century petitions are made for some of the wonder-working bones of St. Leger.¹

The policy by which Ebroin, the mayor of the palace, retained his power—the depression of the higher nobles, the elevation of the lower—belongs to the history of France, not to that of Christianity. What the higher nobility and some of the bishops called rebellious tyranny, his partisans held to be high and rigid justice; yet Ebroin had in his party some of the most holy bishops: saint balanced saint.^k St. Genesius of Lyons, St. Leger, were his enemies; one his victim. In his party were St. Præjectus (St. Prie) of Auvergne, St. Reol of Rheims, St. Agilbert of Paris, St. Ouen of Rouen.^m A council of bishops sat in judgement on St.

interwoven into one all the legends of the period, with much of the patient industry and copious erudition, and with the devout feelings, the prejudices (we must pardon some little of the bitterness of later times) of his spiritual ancestors of St. Maur. M. Pitra looks back with fond reverence to the times when bishops ruled sole and supreme in their cities; when grants of counties were lavished on monasteries; when monastic admiration for monastic virtues created saints by hundreds; when miracle was almost the law, not the exception, in nature. M. Pitra believes that he believes all the supernatural stories of those times, and that with a kind of earnestness differing much from the bravado of belief avouched by some other kindred

writers. The life of St. Leger is in truth an excellent religious romance; but, even in these days, will not pass for history in the literature which still boasts the living names of Guizot, the Thierry's, C. Remusat, Ampère, and their rising scholars.

¹ See in Pitra, p. 439, the letter from the curé of Evreuil (dated Oct. 4, 1833) to the Bishop of Autun. Conceive such a letter addressed to the Bishop of Autun of the days of the republic!

^k "Mulciber in Trojam, pro Troja stabat
Apollo,
Æqua Venus Teucris, Pallas iniqua
fuit."

^m On one occasion, it is said, Ebroin consulted S. Ouen. "Remember Fredegonde," replied the bishop. Ebroin

Leger, at Marli, near Paris: it is difficult to believe that they were not consenting to his death.ⁿ

But Ebroin bore no charmed life: less than a charmed life in those times could not hope duration, not even to attain to good old age. Once he baffled a formidable insurrection; and with the aid of two prelates (Reol, metropolitan of Rheims, and Agilbert of Paris) cut off Martin, one of the grandsons of Pepin the Great, of Landen, who with his cousin Pepin aspired to the mayoralty at least of Austrasia. The bishops swore upon certain reliques that Martin's life should be secure, but they had withdrawn the holy witnesses, and swore on the empty case.^o These bishops, afterwards saints, at least did not protest against the death of the deluded youth. Ebroin himself perished by the blow of an assassin—perished not in this world only. A monk on the shores of the Saône, who had been blinded by Ebroin, heard a boat rowed furiously down the stream. A terrible voice thundered out, "It is Ebroin whom we are bearing to the cauldron of hell."^p

Pepin d'Heristhal, the heir of Pepin the Great of Landen (whose daughter had married the son of the famous Arnulf of Metz), rose to the mayoralty, first in one kingdom, at length in the whole of France. Under his vigorous administration France resumed her unity:

was wise, and understood at once. Fredegonde the example urged by a saint!—*Gesta Francorum*.

ⁿ "Et cum diu flagitantes," the Synod with Ebroin, "non valuissent elicere—ejus tunicam consciderunt a capite,"—a degradation, previous to death, performed by ecclesiastics.—*Apud Bouquet*.

• "Nuntios dirigit, Ægilbertum et

Reolum Remensis urbis Episcopum, ut fide promissâ in incertum super vacuas capsas sacramenta falsa dederint. Quâ in re ille credens eos ac Lugduno-Clavato cum sodalibus ac sociis ad Erchrecum veniens, illic cum suis omnibus interfectus est."—*Fredegar. Contin., apud Bouquet, ii. p. 451.*

^p *Adonis Chron. apud Bouquet, ii. p. 670.*

it ceased to be a theocracy. The bishops retired, it is feared not to their holier offices. Councils, which had been as frequent as diets or malls, ceased. As it ever has been, the enormous wealth and power accumulated by saints, or reputed saints, worked their inevitable consequences. They corrupted their masters, and tempted violent and unworthy men to usurp the high places of the Church. Those who boast the saints, the splendid monasteries, the noble foundations, the virtues, the continence, the wonders of the former generation, as bitterly lament the degradation, the worldliness, the vices, the drunkenness, licentiousness, marriage or concubinage of the succeeding race. It was this state of the clergy which moved the indignation and contempt of St. Boniface, and which the Pope himself hoped to constrain by the holy influence of the German missionary prelate and by the power of Charles Martel.¹

Such then was the clergy of France, when Charles Martel, after a furious conflict, won the inheritance of his father, Pepin d'Heristhal—the mayoralty of France. Even from his birth the clergy had been adverse to Charles. He was the son of Pepin, by Alpaide, whom, in the freedom of royal polygamy, Pepin had married during the lifetime of his former wife, Plectruda. The clergy, not without ground, denied the legitimacy of Charles. Already his patrimony, the royal revenues, being exhausted by his strife for the Mayoralty, Charles had not scrupled to lay his hands on the vast, tempting, misused wealth of the hierarchy.

¹ "Quidam affirmant (quod plurimum populo nocet) homicidas vel adulteros in ipsis sceleribus perseverantes, fieri tamen posse sacerdotes." So writes Boniface at the court of

Charles Martel.—Epist. xii., Giles, i. p. 36. Compare letter to Pope Zacharias, especially on the lives of certain deacons (Epist. xlv.), and the answer of Zacharias.

Erelong, on this kingdom—of which more than one-half of the nobility were bishops or abbots, of which a very large proportion, no doubt the best cultivated and richest land, was in the hands of the monks and clergy—burst the invasion of the unbelieving Saracens. The crescent waved over Narbonne and the cities of the south; churches and monasteries were effaced from the soil. How terrible, how perilous was that invasion, one fact may witness. Autun, in the centre of Burgundy, the city of St. Leger, with all its Gaulish, Roman, Burgundian, hierarchical, monastic splendour, was captured and utterly laid waste. The hierarchy fought not themselves, though the Bishop of Sens did gallantly, and in arms, defend his city. Charles would not be content with the barren aid of their prayers: his exactions, his seizure of their possessions, which they held only through his valour, they still branded as impious and sacrilegious robberies.* Hence the extraordinary contradiction:—while the Pope sees in Charles Martel only the conqueror of the Saracens at Poitiers, only the great transalpine power which may control the hated Lombards, the hero of Christendom, the orthodox sovereign; with the hierarchy of France Charles is a Belshazzar who has laid his unhallowed hands on the treasures of the Church, a sacrilegious ~~tyrant~~ doomed to everlasting perdition.

* Compare M. Guizot's (*Essais*, *xiv.*) suggestions as to the mode in which Charles Martel seized and redistributed church property to his warriors.